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The Week

THE air-mail situation has become so enshrouded in controversy that it may be useful to restate a few of the facts about it. First, it seems to us clear that the contracts made in the Hoover administration were collusive in character and we do not see how Mr. Roosevelt had any alternative except to cancel them. Second, the experts seem agreed that army airplanes lack the safety equipment of the private planes, that army pilots are not trained for steady long-distance flying both by night and by day through all sorts of weather, and that they are not familiar with the air-mail routes. Third, no one can say definitely whether or not the six deaths of army pilots in the past fortnight were preventable. The private companies have themselves had a heavy loss of life among air-mail pilots—so heavy, indeed, that most newspapers hardly any longer regard such a death as important news. Even since the army took over, more people have been killed in commercial flying than in the air mail. The evidence seems to indicate, however, that it would have been wiser to give the army a longer period of preparation, to take over temporarily well equipped planes from the private operators, and to borrow many of their fliers, of whom a large proportion are already in the Reserve Corps. It seems obvious, moreover, that if we are to have army airplanes at all, they should be equipped with every possible safety device, and the pilots should be trained to fly under all possible conditions.

WE FIND it hard to understand why no one has come forward to suggest that the way out of this situation is for the post office to own and operate the entire air-mail system of the United States. We should then be perfectly sure that it was being conducted on a cost basis, and in the public interest, two conditions that have been completely ignored in the recent past. If it is necessary for the same agency that carries the mail to carry passengers as well, why shouldn't the post office do both? Throughout our history, nearly every attempt to have the mail carried by private operators has resulted in terrific scandals. Moreover, if it is true, as we are told, that non-military aviation is an important adjunct to military flying, it is obviously better for this to be in the hands of another branch of the government than to be conducted by private persons. It is a sound principle that national defense shouldn't depend on private companies that profit by such a national calamity as war.

CIVIL law once more rules in Austria. The Social Democrats charged with high treason and rioting as a result of the recent civil war, who would automatically have been condemned to death by the military tribunal, will now be tried in regular courts of law. That a large number of these courageous fighters will nevertheless pay with their lives for their heroic opposition to the fascist Heimwehr is certain. In a speech delivered last Sunday Prince von Starhemberg "let the whole world know that no mercy will be shown to the insurrectionists and their leaders." As for the little Chancellor, he may well say with Pyrrhus: "Another such victory and I am lost." Indeed, Dollfuss' disappearance from the Austrian political scene is merely a matter of days or weeks. The Austrian Chancellor, who, with Mussolini, has been actively preparing

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for months past to restore the Hapsburgs in Austria, has empowered the Archduke Anton of Rumania to initiate conversations with the German Nazis. He hopes to conceal from the world the collapse of his regime, behind an understanding with Berlin, and the extreme politeness of Germany's language to Vienna suggests that this understanding has been reached. Both Rome and Budapest have done their share to bring it about; the repeated visits to Austria and Hungary of Suvich, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, can have no other meaning.

MEANWHILE, in domestic affairs the Dollfuss regime doesn't know where its going, but it's on its way. The latest dispatches confirm the earlier reports that more than 4,000 Socialists were arrested. Two thousand men and women are still behind prison bars, although the government will probably prefer charges against "only" some 700. The Social Democratic party and its subsidiary organizations are definitely outlawed, but the government has not yet announced whether it will dissolve the workers' coöperatives. The retail shopkeepers are insistently demanding this, but the coöperatives enjoy great popularity among the masses. Undefined, also, is the form in which Heimwehr anti-Semitism will find expression. The Austrian Nazis advocate an anti-Jewish policy like that of Germany. The Heimwehr, which numbers wealthy Jewish industrialists among its supporters, inclines toward a moderate anti-Semitism, while the Christian Social party, which is about to be dissolved, favors administrative regulation of "the Jewish question" and opposes binding laws. To the Jews, the dispute seems academic. They expect it to be settled in a few months when the Nazis take over the government.

THE topsy-turvy character of our present politics is well shown by the terms in which Governor Pinchot of Pennsylvania has announced himself as a candidate for the Senate from that state. Governor Pinchot says he will run as a Republican on a "support Roosevelt" platform. The truth is, of course, that he has absolutely nothing in common with the predominant elements in the Republican party, and almost everything in common with the liberal wing of the Democrats to which the President belongs. Mr. Roosevelt has recognized this situation in other cases, and notably that of a pseudo-Republican like Hiram Johnson of California, whom the President is seeking to aid by having no Democrat run against him in his campaign for reëlection. A little more of this sort of thing and we shall really be on the road toward the consummation political realists have long prayed for: a liberal and a conservative party. As for Governor Pinchot, he is a much better man than any other candidate who has appeared or is likely to appear in Pennsylvania and we hope the voters of that state will have sense enough to see this obvious fact.

SOME years ago, Stuart Chase argued that our modern mechanized life has become so complicated and so dependent upon central sources that it might easily be paralyzed in case of war or a great natural calamity. The two heavy snowstorms of the past fortnight in the area around New York City seemed to show that Mr. Chase was right. Oil-burning furnaces, dependent on an electric motor, went cold when the current failed, as it did in many places. Electric stoves and pumps were useless for the same reason. Automobiles were stalled in snowdrifts many of which could have been navigated easily by horse-drawn sleighs. Householders accustomed to order food daily by telephone found themselves caught with larders nearly empty. Thousands of people suffered intensely, and were in real danger of death, under conditions that the New England farmer of fifty years ago would have regarded as no more than the minor inconvenience of any average cold winter. No doubt in many homes a salutary lesson has been learned and preparations made against another storm. But there is also no doubt that Mr. Chase is right, and that many of our present-day comforts are bought at a high price in the form of increased dependence upon fallible central agencies.

THE Nazi regime in Germany is rapidly adopting the outward forms of absolute monarchy. Last Sunday, celebrating the fourteenth anniversary of the founding of the National Socialist party, more than a million party and government functionaries swore personal allegiance to Adolf Hitler. Three million S.A. and Steel Helmet troopers have already sworn this oath in the past. Hero worship in Germany is no longer a matter of personal inclination; it is a patriotic duty, a fundamental political creed to which every German citizen must perforce subscribe. Nietzsche and Carlyle have become the spiritual mentors of the Third Reich. But there is probably more than mere patriotic sentiment behind this demonstration of "unswerving loyalty to the Führer." Relations among the leaders of the Nazi regime are far from harmonious and the would-be aristocrat Göring has delusions of grandeur which have for some time past been a thorn in the side of Hitler and his faithful lieutenants Göbbels and Frick. His influence over Germany's foreign policy has been growing steadily and it has been his uncomfortable habit to grab more than his share of publicity. On the other hand, the proposal to abolish state lines, which would rob Göring of much of his power, has added to the existing resentments. Göring recently piled fuel on the smoldering flames when he issued what amounted to a denial of an interview given by Hitler to a British newspaper in which the latter announced that the Bulgarian Communists Dimitroff, Popoff and Taneff would shortly be set at liberty. Under these circumstances, the Hitler oath becomes more than a mere gesture to please the vanity of an upstart leader. It is the Chancellor's announcement to

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the world at large and Mr. Göring in particular, that he, and he alone, is master in the Reich.

THE New Republic has received the following letter from Algernon Lee concerning the tragic New York meeting to protest the treatment of the workers in Vienna:

> In your issue, dated February 28, you give your readers to understand that I, as chairman of the Labor and Socialist meeting in Madison Square Garden last Friday, wantonly struck Clarence Hathaway in the face. This is an unqualified falsehood. I did not strike, nor try to strike, Hathaway nor anyone else.
>
> I do not suppose you originated this slander. But one who broadcasts a story like this, without having made any effort to verify it, is just as guilty as the one who invents it.
>
> The rest of your article is about equally truthful. It is not a fact that Hathaway asked permission to use the microphone. It is not a fact that he was "beaten with chairs." He was struck by one of the chairs which his Communist followers were throwing from the balcony at the Socialists and Trade Unionists in the reserved portion of the hall. Some of our friends were also hit by these missiles.
>
> If you think it is "disgraceful" for Socialists to use their fists in a mêlée deliberately planned and organized for the purpose of capturing or disrupting such a meeting, you are welcome to your queer opinion. One thing is certain—if some of the disturbers got black eyes, they did not get slashed with furriers' knives nor stabbed in the face with shears, as happened to some of the Socialist ushers.

Mr. Lee knows very well that we did not originate the "slander"; we quoted it directly from Hathaway. Our paragraph placed the principal responsibility for the row on the Communists. It praised Hathaway only on the assumption that he was telling the truth when he said he was trying to calm the meeting. If he was not, we are sorry. It seems to us deplorable that the Communists tried to break up the meeting, that both sides used violence, and that the leaders of both are now trying to sharpen and perpetuate the hostility thus created.

Shall We Trade Abroad?

SECRETARY Wallace's recent pamphlet, "America Must Choose," published by the Foreign Policy Association and the World Peace Foundation, calls for a great national debate on the question of our foreign-trade policy. It is an extraordinarily able presentation, broad-minded and fair in spirit. He points out the possible choices and indicates which one he would take. There is the trend toward complete national self-containment, buying and selling abroad as little as possible. There is the possibility of indiscriminate lowering of tariffs and removal of other restrictions, with the aim of eventual free trade. And there is what he calls the middle course—though not a middle course in the sense of meaningless compromise—the policy of planned international trade, persistently followed. This is the course he favors. We are confident that he is right.

The United States cannot go on as it did before the depression. Up to 1914, we were a debtor nation, and sent abroad a surplus of exports over imports, in payment of our debt charges. During the War the rest of the world bought immensely increased quantities from us; they paid for this excess by selling some of their investments here and by borrowing enough more so that on balance we became a creditor nation instead of a debtor. This meant that we would have to accept more goods from abroad than we sold there. If our imports did not increase, we should have to allow our exports to shrink. We thereupon discouraged imports by successive increases in our tariff. The only reason that our exports did not immediately fall away was that after the War we kept on lending Europe more money with which to buy them. But the end eventually came. So, during the depression, our exports had to decline immensely.

The chief sufferers from the drop in foreign trade were of course the main producers of exportable goods. Among these the cotton and wheat farmers, and the producers of pork and lard, bulk the largest. Many food-importing nations, foreseeing their inability to buy from us, not only had restored their pre-war levels of agricultural production but had nourished their food-growing capacity still further by tariffs. We could not in any case have kept the abnormal war markets, after European peasants left the armies and went back to the fields. In addition it looks as if we had lost permanently much of our pre-war foreign market for wheat. But the outlook for exporting increased quantities of cotton and other articles which we are well fitted to produce, such as pork products, automobiles, typewriters and agricultural machinery, is not dark, if we are willing to accept some really valuable things in exchange, rather than uncollectable debts.

The shrinkage of foreign markets was the primary cause of the huge agricultural surpluses which have brought poverty to American farmers. Crop-restriction plans here are a first answer. It is frequently said that if our own city population had adequate purchasing power, and could eat and wear all they wanted, there would be no crop surplus in this country. That is probably not true—certainly it is not true of wheat or cotton. And in any case it is an academic comment until we have succeeded in raising substantially the purchasing power of the workers.

If we intended to pursue a policy of strict national self-containment, we should have to go much further with crop restriction than we have already gone. We should have to take about fifty million acres of land out of production permanently. We should have to find some other occupation for about half of those engaged in raising cotton. Such painful readjustments would have to be made, and so much

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regimentation would have to be engaged in, if this task were undertaken, that it could scarcely be carried through in a short time without a military dictatorship. And, at the end, we should find ourselves paying more than necessary for goods which others are better fitted to produce than we, and paying less wages than we otherwise could to those engaged in making the things which we are better fitted to produce. This choice Secretary Wallace therefore rightly rejects.

One alternative is to seek a general reduction of the tariff by Congress. It is to go back towards free trade as part of a laissez-faire system. But experience amply proves that Congress will not reduce tariffs much, or in the right places. Laissez-faire simply defeats itself; every interest clamors for protection, and log-rolling determines the rates. Even if it were possible to achieve drastic horizontal reduction by legislative action, we should be likely to cause sudden dislocation to certain large industries dependent on tariffs, and might wipe out some which would be necessary for military purposes. We are forced to plan in international trade as well as in national.

The most feasible, the least painful method is to attempt to keep part of our old international market, and gradually build trade, without climbing the impassable roads toward either complete economic isolation on the one hand, or complete laissez-faire in foreign trade on the other. Instead of holding fifty million acres out of production, we may succeed in selling enough so that it will be necessary to keep only twenty-five million acres idle. We need to know approximately what goods we intend to sell abroad, and in what quantities. And in order to balance these sales without pushing international payments so far out of balance that uncollectable debts are created, we must decide what we want to import in order to pay for them.

This requires planning in tariff reduction. What imports can we best accept? There are those which do not compete with American products at all, since we do not produce them—such as coffee, raw silk and tin. There are those which compete only with high-cost, wasteful and unimportant industries. There are those which compete with native industries that are not large enough to supply our total wants in any case. There are those which compete with important industries, but to a negligible extent. There are those which might compete if there were not a tariff, but whose competition would serve only to drive the prices of American profiteers down to reasonable levels. Thus there are many opportunities for planned tariff reduction which would benefit rather than injure the people as a whole. It would be possible to arrange products in a descending scale according to the desirability of reducing tariffs, placing at one end the products which we do not produce, and at the other products which would be essential in a war, or in the making of which there are large numbers of people engaged, who would immediately suffer from intensified foreign competition. (There are really very few of these.)

Action on such a program could be taken only by the executive, with the advice of an expert commission. This would be particularly true if the tariff reductions planned were not to be unilateral, but by reciprocity agreement. Such agreements would be essential if our exports and imports were to grow simultaneously. Congress should therefore pass a bill setting forth the principles of tariff planning, and delegate action to the President, with the advice of a reorganized tariff commission.

In theory a program like this has immense possibilities for benefit. If honestly and expertly carried out, and if combined with a program that would raise production and purchasing power at home, it would make possible such a rise in the standard of living that we would accept many more imports than before without reducing the output of any domestic industry of the slightest importance. This is the best we can attempt as long as private enterprise governs industry. The danger is, of course, that Presidents and commissions will be subject to the same kind of pressures that have made it impossible for Congress to deal intelligently with the tariff. The danger is that greedy and short-sighted interests will obstruct social planning of foreign trade in the same way they are now obstructing and warping the first tentative attempts to plan industry for the benefit of the whole people. And if we had real social planning at home, we could then give up such clumsy expedients as tariffs, quotas and commissions altogether. We could have a governmental foreign-trade monopoly, which would proceed simply to buy abroad whatever we most need to buy, and to sell in exchange what we could best afford not to consume at home.

Hucksters of Death

DID THE dead of the last war die in vain? This was the subject of a debate between Archibald MacLeish and Malcolm Cowley which was printed last fall in two issues of The New Republic and to which there is now an interesting sequel. The original debate ended with a question that wasn't meant to be rhetorical. "What are you doing," Cowley asked, "to prevent the next war before it is too late?" And now MacLeish gives a partial but convincing answer. Fortune, the magazine of which he is an editor, prints in its March issue perhaps the best article that has yet appeared on the armaments makers and their system of creating and prolonging warfare. The article is in substance an impassioned plea for peace; and Fortune promises to resume the plea in later issues.

The chief impression conveyed by the facts which Fortune has presented is that the armaments makers are internationalists in the same sense that carrion birds are internationalists. The buzzards gather where the corpses are thickest—it doesn't

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matter on which side of the frontier. Whether British, French, German or Italian, the hucksters of death help each other to create war situations, and thus to sell the guns that will inevitably be turned against their own people. Then, if the war situation becomes a war in earnest, they continue this trade through neutral nations—the Germans take French money, the French take German money, the soldiers on both sides die by the million and the steel and chemical industries declare extra dividends; the buzzards fatten.

Let us take a few instances from the last war, most of them mentioned in Fortune's first article. Germany needed nickel for its guns, copper for its shells, glycerine for high explosives. Some Britons and some Frenchmen in places of power kindly saw to it that these essential supplies reached Germany in spite of the blockade—otherwise the fighting would have ended too soon. But their friendly enemies amply repaid the favor. Barbed wire that was made in Magdeburg *after* 1914 was exported to France through Switzerland and was strung outside the French trenches at Verdun; German soldiers died on it by thousands. German magnetoes were used in French army trucks. Krupp detonators, exported through Holland, were used in the shells that rained on the German lines.

Some of these facts, revealed during the German revolution, were later suppressed, so that the documents proving them are now impossible to obtain. But there are plenty of documents dealing with the Briey Basin. Here was an iron-making and steel-making district that was essential to the German armies. Beginning in 1916, it was within reach of the French heavy artillery. All the mines and furnaces there might have been destroyed, so that the War might have ended much sooner. But no shells burst in the Briey Basin. An aviator who bombed it by mistake was reprimanded. A general who talked of shelling it came near being cashiered. And the only excuse offered by the French General Staff was that if they fired on Briey, then the Germans would fire on Dombasle, where part of the French iron was smelted. The steel makers were so close to both governments that they could protect their interests on both sides of the Hindenburg Line.

And this *entente cordiale* of Krupp and Schneider, of Thyssen and Zaharoff, having profited hugely from the last war is now helping to prepare for the next. Take the famous story of Hitler, the Skoda works and the French press. The Skoda works, a great arms factory in Czechoslovakia, is controlled through a holding company by members of the Comité des Forges, which is the trade association of the big French armaments makers. Through the Skoda works, the Comité des Forges is said to have contributed generously to Hitler's campaign funds —the statement has been made on excellent authority, and Hitler once stormed out of a court-room rather than deny it. But at the same time, through the Paris newspapers that it controls, the Comité des Forges was raging against Hitler, was calling on France to increase its armaments in the face of this new danger, was suggesting the immediate necessity of a "defensive" war.

There is, as Fortune says, "a quality of delirium about facts like these." And the facts grow more delirious when we examine into the story of the disarmament conferences, and learn that not only were these attended by armaments lobbyists like Big Bill Shearer, but that the delegates themselves were in many cases stockholders or even directors of the very armaments firms, like Vickers, Schneider and Bethlehem Steel, against whose interests they were supposed to be acting.

In the light of these revelations we are inclined to question Cowley's statement that the dead of the last war died in vain. They died in vain if we consider only the causes for which they thought they were fighting. But Schneider and Krupp and Zaharoff would not say that their lives were wasted. It cost about $25,000 to kill a soldier during the World War. "The important point," says Fortune, "is that every time a burst shell fragment finds its way into the brain, the heart or the intestines of a man in the front line, a great part of the $25,000, much of it profit, finds its way into the pocket of the armament maker." Early in 1917, when there was a real possibility of peace, the British Ambassador to France innocently noted in his diary: "Zaharoff is all for continuing the War *jusqu'au bout.*" And so the War continued *jusqu'au bout.* Some thirteen million men died in the trenches, and the Krupps flourished, and Sir Basil Zaharoff, Knight of the Garter, became the richest man in Europe.

Big-Navy Roosevelt

WITH ANYONE but Mr. Roosevelt at the head of the government, the task of defeating the Vinson Naval Bill, which comes before the Senate this week, would be infinitely easier. The bill is altogether inexcusable. It is a blanket authorization to our admirals to build the navy up to the extreme limits permitted by the London naval treaty. Carried into effect, it would mean an estimated expenditure of $565 million for new ships, together with an amount that can only be guessed at for increases in the navy's air force, which is not limited by treaty.

In Mr. Roosevelt, you find the rare case of a big-navy man who is also, on most other questions, a liberal. Very possibly Mr. Roosevelt's sympathetic regard for the admirals comes from the fact that he was once an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and has all his life been an ardent amateur sailorman. However this may be, there is no doubt that Mr. Roosevelt's advocacy of a big navy has placed many people, who otherwise could be counted on to oppose the Vinson Bill, in an embarrassing position. This is particularly true of the Western progressive bloc in the Senate. Nearly all of them are

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eagerly coöperating with Mr. Roosevelt in his general policies. They declare themselves willing to vote against the Vinson Bill, but they are not willing to lead an attack against the administration on it, although Mr. Roosevelt's personal support is the bill's chief strength.

Beyond the support of the President, the strength of the Vinson Bill comes from two main arguments, both of them spurious. The first is that the bill is a necessary recovery measure, since it will create activity in the languishing capital-goods industries. The obvious answer to this plea is that the same amount of public funds poured into housing, for example, would create equal activity, and the end result would be of great social value instead of being, as in the case of cruisers, a social loss.

The second argument offered in behalf of the Vinson Bill is that it is needed in order to place this country in a favorable position for the world naval conference which must be held before the expiration of the London naval treaty at the end of 1935. In the back of the minds of those who advance this argument you are likely to find an image of a naval conference as a sort of gigantic poker game in which the players push out stacks of chips labeled "Keels Laid Down" and "Ships Appropriated For" into the middle of the table until all players are forced to drop out except one—the man with the biggest paper building program—who thereupon is victor. This is a fantastic interpretation—even of poker.

The many proponents of this argument assert that in 1919 Congress authorized a naval-building program which, if it had been carried out, would have given the United States the greatest navy in history. A year later, with this great building program behind him, Mr. Hughes was able to obtain the acquiescence of England and Japan to the five-five-three naval ratio, and the Washington naval conference was a success. Thereafter the United States virtually abandoned naval building. When the Geneva cruiser conference was held in 1927, we had no keels laid down or ships appropriated for. As a result, the British admirals scoffed at our cruiser demands, and the Geneva conference failed. Again Congress in 1929 adopted a big naval program, and the London naval conference in 1930 brought an agreement.

This argument—that by voting for a big navy you can somehow ensure the success of the 1935 world naval conference—has had great effect among members of Congress. It is, of course, based on a willful distortion of the history of disarmament. The Washington naval conference succeeded because of the simple fact that, in 1921, the people of the three great naval powers, the United States, Great Britain and Japan, wanted an agreement. There was an immense revulsion against war and warlike preparations in America and England in those days, as anyone who remembers the peace mass meetings at that time can testify. In Japan, the first even nominally democratic government in the country's history, the Cabinet of the martyred Takahashi, had come to power, and was violently anti-army and anti-navy. It was politically popular to reach an agreement at Washington, and the naval powers did so. A further reason for the success at Washington was the fact that America and England had come to a complete understanding on the Far East.

By the time the Geneva cruiser conference came to be held, there was a Tory Cabinet in England and a thoroughly militaristic government in Japan. Sir Austen Chamberlain, the British Foreign Minister, was conducting involved negotiations for the rearmament of Germany and the formation of a European "united front" against Soviet Russia. He wanted no sort of disarmament. Furthermore, the United States and England had drifted into a quarrel in China over the rise of the Kuomintang, and Sir Austen had no intention of agreeing with us on cruisers as long as we were, in his judgment, hostile to the British position in Shanghai.

With the London naval conference, however, Ramsay MacDonald's second Labor government had taken office in England, and the anti-militarist Minseito party was in power in Japan. MacDonald owed his election victory over the Tories partly to his revival-meeting speeches on disarmament. It was politically advantageous for him, for Mr. Hoover and for the Japanese to reach an agreement at London, and they all did. In none of these disarmament conferences have either proposed or actual naval programs played a decisive part, and in the nature of the case they never can.

If we want the 1935 naval conference to succeed, the first thing for us to do is to let it be known to the world that there is a peace-loving government in Washington, and there could be no better way to do this than the prompt killing of the Vinson Naval Bill. Beyond this, we can simply hope that there will be, next year, reasonably peaceful governments in England and Japan. Whether or not there will be is something that will depend primarily upon events in Europe and in Asia, but again one obvious way in which we can encourage the anti-militarist elements in London and Tokio is by a smashing defeat for the Vinson Bill in the Senate.

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New Homes for a New Deal

IV: *A Concrete Program*

IN THE preceding three articles, we showed that slum clearance is only a secondary part of the housing program vitally needed for the United States. We pointed out the present physical shortage of dwellings, which is real and growing, no matter how obstinately it may be ignored, and we called attention to the inadequacy of the housing program formulated last July—a program whose original weakness has been increased by the fact that it has since been curtailed, instead of being expanded.

The fundamental difficulty in this situation is the lack of informed opinion as to what a real housing program should do and how it should get to work. This ignorance, which begins at the level of the consumer, works straight up to the responsible leaders of the government. For the latter housing has been an incidental art, instead of the fundamental basis, of a large public-works program.

Before an adequate housing program can be formulated, the government must make a choice. Does it wish to prop up the financial values of real estate, still steadily sinking to their natural levels in our bankrupt cities? Or does it recognize the physical shortage of dwellings, which exists despite the excess of vacancies, and is it ready to throw all its forces behind a gigantic program of *urban reconstruction* and *community planning* and *building?* If the government makes the first choice, it will not even exercise a sound educational influence, and its practical accomplishment will remain on its present pitiful level. If it makes the second choice, it must aid plans for a new kind of building, a new kind of financing, a new kind of community plan. Let us outline the essential basis of a sound social policy which will meet the emergency and build beyond it.

During the past thirty years a series of important discoveries has been made as to the best means of laying out, building and developing a modern community. The most significant of these discoveries are as follows:

The conventional layout of our cities is as wasteful as it is inconvenient. Vast sums of money are spent in streets, paving and street utilities; these sums can be spent to better purpose by a unified plan of development, by decreasing the number of residential streets, by turning the wasted paved areas into playgrounds or gardens, *without increasing the cost per person.* To plan a residential neighborhood adequately, the community plan must be intelligently coördinated to the type of housing and be adapted for it. City planning cannot be done at one time by one set of people, house planning at another time by another set of people, and industrial planning by a third set. They are inextricable. Housing communities must be relatively self-contained and free from the invasion of traffic or noxious industries. The muddle of unrelated aims and operations characteristic of American city development has contributed powerfully to the present financial disorganization of city budgets.

The house is not an isolated unit: it is part of a neighborhood, and the neighborhood in turn is part of a larger regional community, with factories, markets, parks and rural recreational facilities to which it must be related. In order to create the semblance of isolation in America we have encouraged separate buildings on individual plots. But for privacy and for sound economy, good planning means the adoption of row-dwellings, either single-family or in two or three-story flats. The house must be only two rooms deep; and when built in rows it must be oriented for maximum winter sunlight and for prevailing summer breezes. Complicated plans and taller structures increase the costs and decrease the amenities.

The beauty and adequacy of the individual dwelling depend upon the beauty and adequacy of the physical and social environment. This means communal recreation greens and children's playgrounds as part of the original plan and the original cost of development; it means that the neighborhood unit must be insulated against through traffic by means of the plan itself. To obtain the necessary open spaces, the cost of land should be low and must be kept low. On the social side it means the provision for schools that can be reached in safety, it means conveniently located local markets, planned as part of the housing; and it means the provision of the other social institutions that are necessary for well rounded and satisfactory social life; for such a life is the best creator and preserver of real values. In short, the ingredients for economic stability, social use and esthetic beauty in a community must be deliberately established through imaginative, well rounded planning. Without the durability and continuity so provided, the neighborhood is marked for speculative opportunism, transitional uses, and ultimate decay which mere zoning is never sufficient to combat.

To make housing of suitable sanitary and social standards available to the lower income groups, further economies must be taken advantage of, in addition to those suggested above; and these economies will be still necessary even if the wages of the unskilled workers rise to those usually achieved in the skilled occupations. These economies are:

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First: Money at low cost. The general rate would be fixed by whatever the government could borrow at; but to reach the lowest income groups, pending the raising of their real wages, money at less than these rates will be necessary. To make sufficient funds available, the investment in government housing of a certain proportion of the funds held by banks and insurance companies, should be made mandatory. The low return on such investments is compatible with their high degree of safety.

Second: Slow rate of amortization, from fifty to sixty years, instead of the ten to twenty years favored by private enterprises and the thirty at present adopted by the government. The slow rate of amortization will correspond to the real durability of the product, and it will help in the immediate financing, reflected directly in much lower room rentals.

Third: Abolition of the current usury practised in mortgage renewal and second-mortgage premiums by providing for long-term mortgages.

Fourth: Large-scale operations, taking place in a single continuous process over a limited period of time, for the sake of economies in planning, purchasing materials, utilizing machinery and mobilizing labor on the job.

Fifth: Unified administration through a continuing agent such as a municipality, a coöperative society or a limited-dividend corporation. Hence, even if the initiative must be taken and the experiment first carried through by a special Federal Housing Corporation, the encouragement of such housing bodies should be a normal part of the education in housing and of the leading up to eventual administrative decentralization.

Sixth: Rationalization of production at every point. This means that the layout and design of the communities should be in the hands of technicians, architects, community planners, engineers and sociological assistants. Our present communities suffer from the fact that they have been designed, in the main, by untrained and incompetent people, whose work was further botched by the short-sighted speculative aims and social ignorance of their backers and financers. Rationalization also must include the substitution of manufactured parts made by mass-production methods in the factory for parts made on the job. There is need for extensive experiment in new units of building, heating and plumbing. A housing program that promises a large-scale revival of every type of industry over a long period would help overcome the present resistance of trade unions and dealers to necessary experiment.

To state more clearly, in sum, what modern community housing is, let us admit it is *the complete opposite of almost every item in current realty, banking and building practice.* Modern community housing means the end of the premature opening up of vacant territories on the edge of cities, so that they may be broken up by the individual land speculator. It means the end of water systems and transit lines and other municipal utilities in advance of actual use. It means the end of the individual lot and the individual custom-made house, scamped in every detail, with the essential failures concealed by a few gadgets like collapsible ironing boards. It means the end of the old type of own-your-own-home movement, by means of which the speculator unloads on the sucker, and the big industrialist keeps his workers tied to his "investment" and afraid to jeopardize it by a strike. It means an end to dealing with the fundamental environment of human living as a means of speculative profit—hence, the end of the slum and of values based on congestion. It means the end of providing expensive collective utilities for houses and neighborhoods so badly planned and built that they cannot carry the full burden of costs even at the height of their boom, neighborhoods that sink into squalor and bankruptcy as soon as individuals sell out and move elsewhere, or get forced out by foreclosures in periods of depression.

Unless the new housing could promise to strike against these burdens, these extravagances, these forms of economic piracy and social waste, it would not be worth an honest man's serious attention. But what it promises is something more than is implied in this negative program. It promises a sane and durable environment in which generations of men and women can for the first time live a spacious and humane and orderly life, without a disastrous starvation in all the physical elements that make life worth living. Unless economies are effected in the development of the community as well as in the individual unit, good houses cannot be made cheap enough, and cheap houses cannot be made good enough. Even with these economies new housing cannot be distributed to those who need it most without a permanent large subsidy or a substantial rise in wages. Before 1929 about a third of the entire population could not afford a new dwelling that even barely met decent standards: today the percentage is probably well over half. (That fact is recorded in the terrific shrinkage of housing space used, and the temporary "surplus" of dwellings.)

What are the immediate grounds upon which such a policy and program are based? Let us recapitulate.

First: With respect to people, modern community housing establishes the principle that there are certain fundamental objective standards of health and comfort and decency to be achieved in dwellings and neighborhoods—standards that must not be violated. Communally speaking, the reduction in taxes for hospitals, courts, prisons and health services may partly offset the amounts expended; but even if no such reductions were probable, the needs for housing are just as fundamental as the needs for a sound elementary education, and must be met, since private enterprise has absolutely failed.

Second: Large-scale housing in integrated neighborhood communities is necessary in order to recon-

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stitute intelligently the all but ruined structures of our metropolises, their suburbs and smaller cities throughout the country. Even before the collapse took place, the central urban areas were losing population by a continual drift outward toward the open spaces on the outskirts, where space, sunlight, trees, gardens and a healthy outdoor life were—if but temporarily—still possible. The cost of this uncontrolled movement was enormous: disused utilities, disused houses, decayed neighborhoods at the center. As the annual growth of population ceases and our population becomes stable, the old possibility of automatically redeeming these decayed parts by filling them with newcomers or immigrants disappears. Yet the existing centers are often well placed and excellently serviced; both in social institutions and physical utilities there are real values in our existing areas. Apart from the disgraceful mass of decayed housing which has driven people away, what values remain ought to be conserved and expanded. By building new communities within the available cheap land in blighted neighborhoods or waste areas the government would begin the process of large-scale redemption and perhaps bring to their senses the landlords who now hold the decayed properties in the center at fabulous values based on past hopes. When property values at the center represent once more their real income from *decent social use,* the central areas may be restored in pattern only slightly less open than at the periphery, and definitely superior in comeliness and beauty to any existing portion of any American city. When such a pattern is worked out for the lower income groups, the realty interests will be forced to follow it—to their own advantage—for the higher income groups they have hitherto so badly served.

Finally: Housing on the scale we have suggested is urgently needed to make up the existing shortage, to hasten the demolition of slums and blighted areas and the rehousing of their populations, and to wipe out our century-old mass of discredited domestic and municipal equipment. Hence it is not only a major instrument in a large-scale public-works program but the very core of a policy of long-term economic planning.

To state the program in these plain terms is to confess that private interests are entirely incapable of putting it into practice, even if they did not—as they do in fact—bitterly oppose it. For there is no use shrinking from its implications: a sound program for long-term housing in the United States, while it will not decrease the amount of private building for the upper-fifth income group, must be based upon the complete transformation of the methods of layout, finance and design that have been so faultily applied to our past community building. And because the new methods are definitely superior to the old, one cannot pretend that they will not compete with the old. On the contrary, they will make the old housing impossible and hasten its obsolescence.

By a sufficiently large governmental program, housing can furnish a pool of steady employment for at least a generation to come. This must be done under government direction, which can increase or decrease the amount in order to coördinate housing with the general needs of production and consumption as the needs of the moment require. Without such a pool, there will be no means of absorbing the number of unemployed who will remain permanently in this category even if the deceptively blessed state of 1926 is restored. If the government is wise enough to accept this responsibility, and bold enough to seize this opportunity, it will have to begin at once to formulate a real program. Moreover, it will have to undertake the education of both the public and the technicians; and even to counteract the unfortunate effects of its own past year of shilly-shallying and compromise. The essential needs of such a program would be as follows.

First: The foundation of a Housing Administration, on a par with the Public Works Administration, under a director who would be a member of a reconstituted National Planning Council, with more authority and technical proficiency than its present members have.

Second: Generous immediate provision for competent technical directors. Lacking architects, city planners and engineers trained in the new techniques, the government must set up a school for the intensive training of those otherwise competent. There is a sufficient group of American technicians to serve as the nucleus of such an educational program; and they might be temporarily reinforced with some of the distinguished and experienced leaders in architectural and community planning that are now the victims of the Nazi terror in Central Europe. By undertaking from the beginning the task of training, the government will be able to avoid an excessive centralization of planning detail in Washington.

Third: Provision for systematic research must cover both technical and social factors, community facilities, education and administration, new planning methods, new construction methods, etc. New facts or principles should be distributed rapidly and systematically to architects, engineers, building managers, throughout the country. Such creative work must not be confused with the present epidemic of childish surveys, which lack orientation and are so voluminous that they bury more facts than they reveal. There must be research into experimental work and the possible standardization of prefabricated units, to be undertaken possibly in coördination with the National Bureau of Standards.

Fourth: The use of all existing facilities, limited-dividend companies, municipalities, Federal Housing Corporation, to assist in the task of land purchase, organization of demand, and administration.

Fifth: A broad educational campaign in order to pave the way for intelligent local effort and coöperation must include special encouragement to trade unions and coöperative bodies who will undertake to

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formulate and carry through a larger demand on the part of the groups for whom housing is being done.

Sixth: The creation of a new financial set-up, adequate to meet every phase of a long-term housing program. While figures are necessarily purely suggestive pending rigorous analysis, one must look forward to the allotment to community housing of at least $5,000 million annually, the amount to be increased as soon as the necessary organization and administration and technical aid can be made ready.

Seventh: The maintenance from the beginning of the policy of publicly owning and controlling all the land used in community building, including that needed for commercial and industrial structures and for surrounding park or agricultural areas. Planning of the order here suggested cannot take place if speculation and private profit continue to be attached to land ownership.

This program is radical only in the sense that it aims to go to the roots of the trouble. What we need in housing is not a new deal with the old marked cards—and with the old sharp players still sitting at the table—what we need is a new set of cards and a complete new set of rules. It recognizes what has happened in past housing and city development, and instead of planning to stabilize those mistakes and repeat them, it plans to start a new program from the bottom, and to start right. It does not attempt to salvage "values" that do not exist, or to redeem promises that should never have been made, or to bolster up individual "ownership" which should never have been encouraged. It will promote building and provide work for every kind of industry on a scale that will be sufficient to give production in every field a long and steady lift. The program we offer attempts to salvage *people* and to make that salvage permanent by creating a sound community environment for *living*. As a result of this program, private financial values may, quite incidentally, be kept from sinking below the point they will eventually sink to if the old course of development is heedlessly continued; but this is conditional upon the acceptance by the real-estate interests of the same deflation that every other form of property has now gone through. As for public financial values, as expressed in taxable properties and the general upkeep of municipal equipment and municipal services, it is only by this basic new deal in housing that they can be put on a sound foundation.

Finally, this program, by creating a pool of employment, by putting money directly into circulation for goods and services—not into restoring the waning hopes and abortive plans of banks and mortgage holders—will help create the very economic conditions needed for its success. It is community housing, and not the gadget industries, that will pull us out of the mire—if anything will. The need for housing is pressing; and the demand for further housing replacement will be, for at least a generation, far beyond our capacity to exhaust it. If we face the need and give intelligent direction to the demand, we will transform the entire face of our country and lay a foundation for a stable and healthful community life.

ALBERT MAYER, HENRY WRIGHT
AND LEWIS MUMFORD.

This is the last of four articles dealing with the present housing situation.—THE EDITORS.

Tax Favors for Big Speculators

THE REVENUE bill recently introduced into the House of Representatives will correct a number of the abuses that were revealed by the Pecora investigation into the income-tax practices of the Mitchells and the Wiggins, the Lamonts and the Morgans. But the bill's new provision for the taxation of so-called capital gains is hardly less vicious than the present capital-gains tax. This little-understood section of the old tax law is the largest of the loopholes through which wealthy men have been able to escape their fair share of the nation's tax burden. It virtually annuls the surtax on speculative profits from long-term investments by permitting gains on the sale of property that has been held two years or more (called capital gains) to pay a flat tax of 12½ percent in lieu of a combined normal tax and surtax running up to 63 percent. It thus remits as much as 80 percent of the taxes that would otherwise be paid by the "big fellows" on profits that in boom years make up at least one-half their total incomes and represent less useful service to society than any other major class of gains. Moreover, the great bulk of this relief from high surtaxes goes to taxpayers who have little or no just claim for relief.

Under the pending revenue bill the tax on capital gains would be computed at the regular normal-tax and surtax rates, but only a part of the capital gains would be included in net income subject to tax—80 percent for property held one to two years, 60 percent for property held two to five years, and 40 percent for property held five years or more. If enacted, the bill would reduce the tax favors granted to this class of gains, and would distribute the remainder more evenly between large gains and small, and between longer-term and shorter-term investments. But it would still give the recipients of million-dollar incomes a wholly unwarranted reduction of about 60 percent in their taxes on speculative profits from five-year investments.

From 1925 to 1929 the bounty granted by the capital-gains tax to favored speculators amounted to no less than $750 million, of which at least three-fourths was wholly unjustifiable. Under the present law the unjustifiable relief granted on the same gains would be $2,000 million, and under the pending bill it would be well over $1,000 million, of which something like $500 million would go to taxpayers with incomes of one million or more.

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It may be fanciful to turn back to the boom years of the late twenties for figures to measure the effects of 1934 tax policies. But is not now the time to adjust our tax system to a new period of rising prices, when the speculators will be in clover, as they were from 1925 to 1929? The administration's currency measures are designed to produce a price rise. Returning prosperity will almost inevitably bring it. If its benefits are not to be monopolized by the speculators, measures to ensure a wider distribution should not be delayed.

The only equitable claim of investors for special consideration in the taxation of their speculative profits arises from the fact that such profits are not taxable until *realized* by the sale of the property from which they are derived. Gains that presumably accrued through several years may thus be taxed in one year, and may be subjected to much higher rates, under our steeply graduated surtax schedule, than they would have borne if divided through the years in which they accrued. The House subcommittee on tax revision and the Treasury Department agree that "the tax on a capital gain should approximate the tax which would have been paid if the gain had been realized in equal annual amounts over the period for which the asset was held." Allowance should also be made for interest on the tax payments that have been deferred by deferring the realization of the gain. With that modification, the quoted statement affords a fair standard by which to test the soundness of methods designed for the solution of this problem. But both the present law and the substitute proposed in the pending bill utterly fail even to approach that standard. Instead they both grant unwarranted tax reductions several times greater than the excessive burdens that capital gains would bear if no relief were afforded.

If no relief were granted on capital gains, a married man without dependents having an "ordinary" income (apart from capital gains) of $100,000, and realizing in one year a profit of $500,000 on a five-year investment, would pay, at the rates fixed in the pending bill, four years' tax on $100,000, amounting to $121,432, and one year's tax on $600,000, or $324,683, making a total of $446,115. On the assumption that his profit accrued evenly over the five years he should have paid five years' tax on $200,000, or $433,915 in all. His only claim for relief arises from a threatened overpayment of $12,200—less than half the interest he has saved (at 5 percent) by deferring his tax payments. Yet the present law reduces his tax by $232,000 and the pending substitute would reduce his tax by $179,925.

A man with an "ordinary" income of one million who realizes a capital gain of five millions would pay thereon at regular rates a tax of $3,150,000, whether the gain was realized in one year or spread over five years. He has *no equitable claim for relief,* but on the contrary has saved $315,000 in interest (at 5 percent) through deferment of taxes; yet the present law reduces his tax by $2,525,000 and if the property has been held five years or more, the pending substitute would reduce his tax by $1,890,000.

Even men with "ordinary" incomes from $25,000 to $100,000 get, for the most part, grossly excessive relief. Ignoring the interest factor, and assuming in each case a capital gain, derived from a five-year investment, amounting to five times the taxpayer's ordinary income, we find that a man with an ordinary income of $25,000 might justly claim a reduction of $24,535 in the tax he would pay at regular rates, but gets a reduction of $39,205 under the present law and $40,305 under the pending bill; a man with $50,000 might justly claim $27,500 but gets $104,750 under the present law and $86,450 under the pending bill; a man with $75,000 might justly claim $14,184 but gets $168,935 under the present law and $132,450 under the pending bill. As the taxpayer's average income rises above $100,000 his equitable claim for relief goes down, but the relief granted shoots upward at an accelerated rate. Moreover, in incomes below $50,000, where the relief granted is moderate, capital gains amounted to less than 5 percent of the taxpayers' total incomes in 1925 to 1929, but in incomes above five millions, where the relief granted is most grossly excessive, capital gains amounted to about 65 percent of the taxpayers' total incomes in those years.

The capital-gains provision of the pending bill fails to accomplish its avowed purpose of equalizing taxation, as between such gains and other income, because it takes into account only one of a number of factors that determine the amount of relief that should equitably be granted with respect to capital gains. The factor considered—the length of time the property has been held—is grossly overweighted. Assuming an ordinary income of $20,000 and a capital gain of $50,000 on a five to twenty-year investment, we find that from 64 to 74 percent of the capital gain should be included in taxable income in order to obtain a just tax, against 40 percent prescribed by the bill. For an investment lasting from two to five years, from 73 to 84 percent should be included, against 60 percent prescribed by the bill. For an investment lasting from one to two years the percentage should range from 80 to 100, against 80 percent prescribed by the bill.

A more important factor—namely, the size of the taxpayer's ordinary income—was mentioned in a published statement of the Treasury Department to the Ways and Means Committee, but it is ignored in the bill. No less important is the amount of the capital gains realized in prior years. Assuming a five-year investment, if such gains realized this year do not exceed those realized in each of the preceding four years, it is obvious that the taxpayer has no just claim for relief.

The size of the capital gains is also a factor. If a taxpayer's ordinary income is $35,000 and he has

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a capital gain (from a five-year investment) of $5,000, 100 percent of the gain should be used in computing the tax, instead of 40 percent as prescribed in the bill, but if the capital gain amounts to $75,000 only 74 percent should be used.

A proposal like the capital-gains provision in the pending bill, which grants unwarranted tax favors amounting to far more than the justified relief it gives, is wholly intolerable. The relief provision should either be abandoned altogether, leaving capital gains subject to full taxation at regular rates, or it should be modified so that the tax on such gains will be not less than it would have been (at current tax rates) if the gains had been spread evenly over the years during which the property was held. Even so we shall be giving the long-term speculators the benefit of the biggest doubt; for such men very commonly take prompt advantage of rises in security prices, so that their profits really accrue in the year of sale.

HERBERT S. WOOD.

Has Mussolini Gone to the Left?

BEING recently in the city of Chicago, I picked up a morning newspaper, vaguely expecting tales of private murder and violence. Instead I saw all across the front page of Mr. Hearst's Herald and Examiner, "Mussolini Abolishes the Capitalist System."

Blinking slightly I looked for the story which was to justify this remarkable headline. The British Empire, I reflected, is said to have been acquired in a fit of absence of mind; but if Mussolini had abolished the capitalist system he must have been suffering from dementia as well as amnesia. Had not he himself described his regime as "a blood transfusion for Italian capitalism"? Had he not in very fact poured the life blood of the Italian masses into the arteries of Italian capitalism in order at all costs to give it a new lease of life? It would indeed be strange if after such undeniably successful efforts on behalf of the Italian capitalist class he should suddenly abolish their system!

There was and is, of course, no question of anything of the sort. But it did momentarily seem to me possible that Mussolini had adopted some grandiose leftward gesture for demagogic purposes.

The message of the Rome correspondent of The Chicago Herald and Examiner disposed, however, of this possibility. It turned out that what Mussolini had abolished (or at any rate said he was going to abolish) was not the capitalist system, but the Italian Chamber of Deputies!

I must confess that I had forgotten that this institution still existed. The Italian Parliament has long ago, of course, been shorn both of any form of democratic representation and any legislative power. It is a meaningless rubber stamp for the will of Mussolini, or rather, in the last analysis, for Mussolini's masters, the Italian capitalists and landlords. Democratic parliaments are all today but shadows of themselves, yet it was the proposal to abolish this shadow of a shadow which was trumpeted before the world as the abolition of the capitalist system!

What significance can we possibly attach to both this farcical plan and to several of Mussolini's recent actions, such as the much publicized new law setting up the corporations? (Incidentally, this is, if I remember rightly, the sixth law or decree setting up the corporative state, the first being passed in April, 1926.) The only real significance of these measures is their propaganda value. They will leave, as can be shown very simply, the realities of Italian capitalism entirely unchanged. But what is significant about them is that Mussolini, subtle and sensitive demagogue as he is, has come to the conclusion that the capitalist system has become so unpopular that he can do nothing more popular than to announce that he has abolished it. It may be objected, however, that although Mussolini has not abolished the capitalist system his new measures do constitute an important degree of state interference in industry and are therefore leading in a collectivist direction. Let us examine this claim.

Now it is quite true that recent Italian legislation has involved a considerable degree of state intervention in economic affairs. But before we hail this as a step towards socialism, or at any rate collectivism, it may be well to examine the nature of the intervention. Mr. Arnaldo Cortesi, the strongly pro-fascist Rome correspondent of The New York Times, has recently thrown a good deal of light on this matter. His message of November 10 is headed, "Italy guarantees return on capital in sound industry," and when we read Mr. Cortesi's message we find that, unlike the message in The Chicago Herald and Examiner, it fully substantiates the headline.

To guarantee shareholders in certain favored Italian enterprises a return on their capital whether or not the enterprise in which they have invested is making money, is precisely what Mussolini's intervention in industry amounts to. Mr. Cortesi's message of November 12 makes the position abundantly clear. He is describing the working of the recently created Institute for Industrial Reconstruction. "In the ten months of its existence," he writes, "the Institute has intervened to save shareholders in concerns which, through faulty management or excessive expansion during the boom years, threatened to become total losses." He then goes on to describe the biggest of the operations of the Insti-

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tute, the "reorganization of the great Italian electrical company, Societa Idroelettrica Piedmontese." This company, "having grown to gigantic proportions, was reduced to bankruptcy . . . its shares rose from the original nominal value of 125 lira each to 250 lira, and then dropped until no purchasers were to be found at 20 lira."

These shares, Mr. Cortesi then explains, have now been revalued by the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction at fifty lira. No wonder, he adds proudly, "the shareholders at a meeting drew up and sent an enthusiastic telegram to Premier Mussolini." He adds the statement of principle that "it is emphasized here that the Institute for Industrial Reconstruction fulfills its task of selecting and coördinating enterprises worthy of being helped but does not replace private enterprise." The new capital provided by the Industrial Reconstruction Institute is to be raised as a direct state loan. The decree issuing this loan has, according to Mr. Cortesi's message of November 11, some remarkable features. For example, shareholders, "in addition to a guaranteed 4-percent return, will receive 80 percent of any profit exceeding 4 percent, provided such profit does not exceed 6 percent, and 50 percent of any profit exceeding 6 percent." In other words, there is a guaranteed minimum but no maximum.

Here we have a perfect picture of fascist intervention in state affairs. It is true that this intervention is utterly at variance with the privileges of classical laissez-faire capitalism. But what kind of a change, and a change for the benefit of whom, does it connote? Can it possibly be denied that it is a change, not towards any form of collectivism, but to the new capitalist form of monopoly capitalism? The essential feature of the private ownership of the means of production is left unchanged, but the capitalist class, the shareholders, are guaranteed by the state against loss. Thus the whole of the old case for capitalism, the case that as the risk of enterprise is left to the private individual so must be the profit, is destroyed.

What has happened is that the capitalist system has got into such difficulties that the capitalistic class is no longer willing to run any risks. It will not invest capital, and so keep the industrial machine going, because it has been terrified by its recent losses. Hence, the capitalist state steps in and attempts the impossible task of guaranteeing capitalist profits in perpetuity without destroying private property in the means of production. How strictly Mussolini limits his intervention to this purpose is shown by his speech winding up the debate on the New Corporations Bill, as reported in The London Times of January 14. Apparently, even Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal is far too radical for Signor Mussolini's taste. He denounces it as communism. "This communism," he says, "as it appears to us in certain of its manifestations of exasperated Americanism (extremes meet), is only a form of state socialism."

The truth is that there is not one atom of justification for the view that Mussolini has turned to the left. In words, he has in the past and may well again in the future use the language of revolution. But it reality he is drifting steadily to the right. He is drifting, that is to say, along the inevitable course of monopoly capitalism. The New York Times of Sunday, December 3, printed a fairly adequate report of Mussolini's big speech on the Corporations Bill. This speech shows the curious double character of Italian fascism. Italian fascism inherited an, on the whole, undeveloped capitalist community; hence it has distinct traces of pre-capitalist peasant and feudal elements. Mussolini even denies in this speech that Italy is, or ever has been, a capitalist state; he holds out a sort of pre-capitalist utopia as the ideal to which he is working. "In my opinion," he says, "Italy should remain a nation of mingled economic endeavor, with a strong agriculture as the basis of everything. A small and medium-healthy industry, a bank which does not speculate, a trade which carries on its unchallenged business, are the things which quickly and rationally inspire the thanks of the consumers."

This pretty picture is unquestionably a much idealized portrait of early nineteenth-century laissez-faire, freely competitive capitalism. Now from such a system the idea of planning, state control and monopoly is necessarily totally excluded. And yet side by side with this picture, we find Mussolini going on to claim that he is going to plan Italian economy. "Today we bury economic liberalism. The corporation plays on the economic terrain, just as the Grand Council and the militia play on the political terrain. Corporationism is disciplined economy, and from that comes control, because one cannot imagine a discipline without a director."

These two conceptions are diametrically contradictory; but it is the second one which represents the reality, the reality, not indeed of a planned economy, but the reality of the monopoly capitalism which is developed in the northern industrial areas of Italy, just as it is developing in every other part of the capitalist world.

Finally, it may be objected that fascism, by fostering monopoly capitalism (though it does so no more than does any capitalist government), takes a step towards a planned collectivized economy; that in this sense fascism prepares the way for communism itself. This delusion is widespread, but nothing could be further from the truth. Monopoly capitalism is the direct opposite and antithesis of a planned collectivized economy. Monopoly capitalism, or to use its other name, imperialism, does, it is true, abolish some of the competitive laissez-faire features of an earlier-stage capitalism within each state. But these competitive, warring, antagonistic features of capitalism reappear in monopoly capitalism, or imperialism, between whole industries, and finally, between whole capitalist states. Competition, eliminated in its petty, comparatively

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harmless form, is intensified a hundredfold in its most violent and most disastrous form. And the final and most ruinous form of capitalist competition is imperialist war. Hence, the extreme nationalism, jingoism and war-mongering of fascism is no accident but an inevitable and integral part of fascist economic policy.

Of course, it is true that fascism, which is more and more becoming the characteristic political form of monopoly capitalism, is the last stage of capitalism, and will be followed, when it destroys itself in war, by the workers' revolution and communism. In that sense, and in that sense alone, fascism is a step towards communism. But it is a step towards communism only in the sense that it is the opposite pole to communism; that it is the ultimate phase of capitalism.

JOHN STRACHEY.

Warmth for Sale

Florida Starts Back Toward Normal

THE BIG news from Florida is that her chief crop is a good one this year. The tourist tide is coming in again. Throughout the state, hotel reservations are 20 to 30 per cent better than a year ago; and in some places people are being turned away by the hundred. Miami reports 200,000 winter visitors, and the best season—not since 1929, but since 1925. With the usual honorable exceptions, the hotels have gleefully jacked up their rates to the pre-depression level. Telegraphed reservations, unless confirmed, are laughed at. At ten successive hotels along the Miami bayfront this reporter was contemptuously turned away by clerks who no longer feel the need to be courteous; and several said frankly that a person traveling alone could not get a room unless he was prepared to pay the two-person rate. As in the days of the big boom, an emergency bureau has been set up in the Chamber of Commerce to tell tourists where they may find a place to lay their heads. Conditions in other Florida cities are similar if not quite so striking.

What is the cause of this rush of winter refugees, so much greater than is justified by the restoration of business throughout the country? Floridians give you various explanations. There are, for instance, several thousand Cubans in and near Miami, mostly supporters of former President Machado, who fear reprisals if they were to go home. There are some Americans who used to go abroad, and can no longer do so because of the depreciation of the dollar. There are even, I am told, a few Europeans who are at last enabled by the exchange rates to have a look at those quaint Americans. There are probably some people who gambled successfully in the stock market in 1933. There may be some who spend their money more readily than before on the ground that inflation may whittle away its value. A few people go to Florida for the winter to live cheaply in the mild climate (and it can be done, if one keeps away from the gilded booby traps). The bitter cold of this winter doubtless increased the exodus from the North. Most of all, however, there are middle-class Americans who, even through the worst of the depression, had surplus cash, and failed to spend it because of well justified fear for the future. These people, whether wisely or not, have undergone an extraordinary return of confidence—confidence in the President, in prosperity and in the safety of their capital. They are spending again—not quite so exuberantly as in the great days of the boom, but sufficiently to send a Florida train out of New York in five sections, to fill the hotels and to restore that recently novel spectacle, a waiting queue of people before restaurant or motion-picture theatre.

Riches Among the Rags.—This phenomenon is all the more remarkable because it is seen against a background of desperate poverty. Aside from her winter tourist trade, Florida is completely down and out. Like the rest of the South, she has been living largely on federal money. Heaven knows what she would have done without the C.W.A. in particular and other sources of federal funds in general. About a hundred and fifty of her towns are in default on their obligations. Even so comparatively conservative and solid a community as St. Petersburg calmly announced the other day that henceforth tuition would be charged in the city high schools, and wealthy residents were invited to "adopt" (pay tuition for) children of the poor who would otherwise be denied the blessings of secondary-school education.

The tourists, if they were not so self-absorbed, so intent on the maximum degree of sunburn in the minimum length of time, might witness around them the physical evidence that something is wrong with our civilization. On the outskirts of Miami stands a vast hotel, beautiful in design, erected at a cost of millions for the comfort of winter guests. It was not quite completed when the boom collapsed, and like the houses of Pompeii, it stands at just the point in its history at which financial catastrophe struck it. Today it is a chicken farm, with incubators and coops in the luxurious bedrooms that were to have housed weary and wealthy Northerners at $25 a day, European plan (which is the current

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rate in Florida's better hostelries). Across the city is another vast and towering ruin, not even occupied by the lowly White Wyandotte. Its unglazed windows stand open to the storms of Heaven. It looks, in fact, remarkably like the ruins to be seen all over Europe, ruins that in every case are monuments to a civilization dead and ended, an epoch in history which for some reason or other failed to survive and is today one with the mammoth and the iguanodon.

The Jungle Follows the Boom.—Even more striking in some ways are the vast suburban "developments" started during the boom and today useful chiefly as monuments of men's folly. There are miles of beautiful hard-surfaced roadway now breaking up as the jungle comes back, and occupied only by the little sun-loving lizards flicking back and forth among the weeds. Tottering signboards carry, half-effaced, the names of "boulevards," "ways" and "places" (the developers have always hated to call a street a street), all christened by that anonymous genius who does the Pullman cars. Some of these developments are without a single house; while others, even more desolate, have a few buildings inhabited by lonely pioneers. It was a rule of the realtors of that lost civilization not to permit any two of the earliest settlers to build in the same square block, so as to get the maximum effect of development with the minimum number of cash customers. They expected, of course, that the vast interstices would also be occupied; but they were not, and the results are too horrible to contemplate. This is especially true because Florida architecture (most of it in the bastard "Mediterranean" style) is bad beyond belief, even to the tolerant eye of one like myself who has lived many years in a semi-tropical country and knows the concessions which must be made to heat, glare and aridity.

Autumn Garden.—There are two great classes of Florida winter visitors. One goes to Miami, and is composed, by and large, of the sort of people who like to bet on dog races. The other is the aged and infirm, who seek the slightly less enervating sunshine of the West Coast. Ring Lardner immortalized this second type in "Golden Honeymoon"; but he left plenty of field work still to be done by some competent sociologist, and an interesing book might well be written on this theme—to be called, possibly, "Winter Middletown." In St. Petersburg, for instance, there is a community whose average age must be ten or fifteen years more than that of the typical American town. It is a forerunner of what we shall see everywhere in another two decades, when the population of the country is stabilized or declining, babies are few and the proportion of the elderly greatly augmented. The streets of St. Petersburg are full of charging automobiles driven by madcap grandfathers—cars only nominally under control, which look as though they might crash into something at any minute, and often do. All along the sidewalks in the chief business section are innumerable green painted benches, so that any faltering graybeard who needs to sit down and regather his strength may do so without walking more than a few feet. The business section of the city consists in great part of five-and-ten-cent stores, where elderly visitors wander contentedly for hours along the counters, emerging after half a day's shopping with aggregate purchases of eighty-five cents. Even the sidewalks have miniature concrete ramps at the curb, so that one who is unable to negotiate a four-inch step may still navigate safely, taking his time and leaning on a walking stick, under the cloudless serenity of the bluest of skies.

Souvenir.—A momentary congestion on the highway caused our big long-distance bus to halt briefly in four-lane traffic, beside a curious equipage. It had once been an automobile, but the engine and all other heavy parts had been removed, shafts had been added, and between them was a pessimistic and negative-minded mule. There are thousands of such vehicles throughout the South and West, grim reminders of the days when everybody had a car and both horse and mule were supposedly on the way to extinction. The sight of this equipage stirred the saturnine Southerner in the seat next to me as nothing else had done in our journey. When the bus gears clashed, preparatory to our start, he leaned out the open window and addressed the solemn-faced, elderly Cracker who was driving. *"Hoover cart!"* he shouted. The driver made no reply, and in an instant we were roaring down the highway again.

Aria da Capo.—While the devil was sick, this past four years, many people predicted that we should never see again anything like the gaudy, wicked days of the boom. If Florida is any indication, they were wrong. The winter's tourist tide has already been enough to bring back the first faint symptoms of the old disease. The real-estate men are dusting off their huge bird's-eye drawings of Hysteria Heights as it will look after all the buildings have been built which, unfortunately, never will be built. The big free buses to the scene of the crime are beginning to run again, filled with suckers all eager to buy something today and resell it tomorrow for more money. It will not be long, as things are going, before dizzy blonde saleswomen will again be parading Flagler Street, Miami, as of old, cooing in the ear of the passerby an invitation which, alas, one in four invariably used to misunderstand. The Bourbons are not the only group of whom it is fair to say that they learn nothing and forget nothing. In any given civilization, this applies to most of the human race.

Portrait of an Era.—Palm Beach is where the true owners of America go to escape the blasts of

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Northern winter. Here, where creamy rollers from a blue-purple ocean break on golden sand, are to be found, for a few weeks after Christmas, the owners of the nation's industry, and their retinue. Here may be seen such slight remnants of social exclusiveness as still exist in our "Society"—you must have a great deal of money, it must not be too sudden and recent, nor too conspicuously marked by scandal, in order to be accepted at Palm Beach (though less eligible people of course can and do go there and hang forlornly around the fringes). Miami Beach, on the other hand, is open to all. One end of it is for the poor; the other is for those with money and (except in a few special areas) it doesn't matter how you got it. Sea, sun and sand are very like those at Palm Beach, a few miles away; but the human spectacle is a very different one.

I must admit that to me the most interesting thing about Miami Beach this winter was not on the beach but in the sky above it. Back and forth through the glorious blue there flies every day an airplane. It is a lovely thing, of the newest streamline monoplane design; and as it moves it seems as much at ease, as appropriate to the ether, as the gulls themselves. But it is not swinging back and forth above our heads idly; it has a mission, and is earning its way through the sky. There is a long streamer behind it, with a message in great letters standing straight in the breeze. It is advertising. It is advertising a night club where "female impersonators" may be found. . . . I can't help thinking that a philosopher might easily paint a portrait of our whole era, beginning with this simple sight in the air above Miami Beach.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

Sunshine City, Florida.

Poem

Even whilst I watch him I am remembering
The quick laugh of the wasp gold eyes.
The column turning from the staring pane
Even while I see I remember, for love
Is soaked in memory and says
I have seen what I see and I wear
All pasts and futures like a doomed, domed sky.
Thus I wear always the glint of quick lids
And the blue figure turning under earth: these are
Fixed in a night that knows and sees
The equable currents.

This night my life lies with no past nor future
But only space. It watches
Hope and despair and the small vivid longings
Like minnows gnaw the body. Where it drunk love
It lives in sameness. Here are
Gestures indelible. The wiry copper hair
And the mothlike lips at dusk and that human
Glance, which makes the sun forgotten.

STEPHEN SPENDER.

Washington Notes

First Anniversary—Weighing a Horse at Full Gallop—The Long Road That Has No Turning Back

BY THE time this issue of The New Republic is on the stands the President will have completed his first year in office and his Cabinet will have given him the coöperative dinner which it plans. It has, of course, been an astounding year. No President ever had one like it, and the reviews already beginning to appear are comprehensive, thorough and satisfactorily laudatory. Much of the laudation unquestionably is deserved. No fair man, I think, will withhold credit from the President for the really fine things he has done or the tremendous improvement in conditions within the past twelve months. Perhaps it is true that the improvement is not entirely the result of his program, and that the world recovery, the start of which coincided with his inauguration, has played an important part. Nevertheless, with the people generally full credit is given the President and even among the more discriminating it is conceded that the reconstruction features of the New Deal, as distinguished from the recovery features, are of real and lasting value. But to assume, as most of the chroniclers are doing, that the presidential year has been without mistakes, some of which have been extremely costly, is, I think, not only to paint an inadequate picture but to do no service to either the President himself or the experiments upon which he is engaged. A good many blunders have been made, some of them inevitable and some that could and should have been avoided. It would be more helpful generally if they were not entirely ignored—which appears to be the general journalistic trend.

To return to the completion of the presidential first year—it seems more worth while to look ahead now than look back, and the reason is that the accomplishments listed in the record are anything but static. They are changing daily in such a way than none can tell today what the picture will be a year from now. The N.R.A. is certain to undergo a revamping, the need of which has become too apparent to be longer delayed. The utterly unsatisfactory conditions that have resulted from some of the more important codes have caused something in the nature of a revolt among the smaller business men and cries of anguish from the consumers, who, as a class, have had a great deal of advertising but a minimum of protection. The invitation to the public to come to Washington on March 5, bringing their grievances and criticisms, so grandiosely issued by General Johnson last week, does not, in the judgment of most, mean very much. It will, of course, be quite a show, with the General himself playing the leading role, but no one expects a great deal to be accomplished from a mass meeting. If the N.R.A. is to be made to function truly in the way desired, the overhauling has got to be done not by ballyhoo and in the presence of a hundred reporters and camera men, but through the quiet getting together of those clothed with power to correct the inequalities and make the adjustments demanded. It might be said further that these things will not be achieved until one of two things happens—either some of the men in key positions undergo a

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change of mind and heart, or new men of new minds are obtained. There would, I think, be more confidence in Mr. Johnson's ability to correct the things he now concedes to need correction if his effort were accompanied by less noise and more direct action.

A change of the agricultural policy for the coming year also seems to be pending. Its implications and possibilities are wide and interesting. What is happening is a transition from the voluntary crop-reduction plan of the past year to a compulsory-reduction policy. It was first brought forward by Senator Bankhead of Alabama in connection with the cotton-surplus problem, and now the President appears to be committed to it. Once this is done in respect to cotton, it will be extended to other crops as well, and mark a long step toward the completely "planned economy" which is the goal of some of the more influential of the liberal advisers within the administration. Secretary Wallace, who has established himself as one of the really sound and unquestionably sincere men in authority here, will have charge of operations. He has doubts about the wisdom of the scheme and thinks it should not be permanently adopted until a more thorough discussion gives the people a chance to grasp its full potentiality. In a recent pamphlet published jointly by the Foreign Policy Association and the World Peace Foundation, entitled "America Must Choose," Mr. Wallace, with characteristic candor, pointed out the ultimate possibilities of the proposed compulsory plan. He thinks it may lead to a complete system of licensing for every farmer for every product, and states that "By the end of 1934, it may mean the withdrawal from cultivation of 43 million acres."

The ambitious nature of such a program makes the original agricultural experiment appear positively vacuous, and it is not surprising that the man upon whom will rest a large share of the responsibility of so prodigious a venture should want to feel as certain of his ground as he can. There is, of course, a lot to say upon both sides of the new policy. I touch upon it here chiefly to make the point that to review Roosevelt's record is a waste of time. Constant extension and alteration of policy will deprive the past policies of all resemblance to anchors—or even compass points.

It is not only the N.R.A. and the A.A.A. that are changing. The same is true in other directions. With the abandonment of the C.W.A. on May 1 the administration, it is rumored, plans to support the idea of Director Harry Hopkins for the establishment here of a genuine dole built along British lines. The belief is that such a system, combined with Secretary Perkins' plans for state unemployment insurance under federal supervision, will constitute part of Roosevelt's program for the next session, to come along soon after the election. If by that time the recovery of business has not been sufficient to enable the government to withdraw entirely from federal relief, something along these lines is sure to be done. Once having accepted the principle of direct federal relief, there is, in the opinion of most observers, no such thing as complete retirement. The burden may, of course, be lightened with the return of better business, but it will always hereafter be a part of the federal load. Clearly, the C.W.A. is an unworkable way of dealing with a permanent problem, and the sensible thing is to adopt the most practical, efficient and economical plan for handling it. In Mr. Hopkins' opinion, a modified form of the British dole is the best available idea and the belief is strong that to this we probably shall come within a year.

This is only one of the myriad changes that are occurring and are going to go on occurring in the New Deal. All this was foreseen by the more gifted of the administration advisers. In the nature of things experiments have to develop and expand. Mistakes have to be made and new lines taken. No worth-while review of the Roosevelt administration can be made while policies are so obviously fluid.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

A Lawyer's Life Can Be a Happy One—
On Two Sides of the One Case—
An Impartial Commission

MUCH THAT goes on in this complicated world of ours is so complex, so obscure, that the simple mind is lost in the effort to trace the motives and standards that govern the conduct of men. The tortuous road is even more involved when we follow the footsteps of those lordly persons who are lawyers for great international bankers.

One of the lordliest of these great legal institutions is the firm of Sullivan and Cromwell. The heads of these gentlemen rise too far above the clouds for me to call in question their acts. Yet I cannot help a feeling of bewilderment at a recent episode in our financial history.

As everyone knows, Americans loaned some two billion dollars to Germany during those wonder years that Mr. Coolidge gave us. The loans were made to the government, to cities and to various German corporations. Some $500 million was loaned in various short-term credits by large American banks of which the Chase National Bank, headed by the incomparable Albert Wiggin, was the largest. These were commercial loans. Over $1,500 million was loaned on long-term bonds, and these bonds, bearing high interest, were sold by investment bankers to the American people. The Chase Securities Corporation, affiliate of Mr. Wiggin's bank, was one of the largest peddlers of these bonds to American investors. In those days Germany was paying reparations at the rate of $1 in reparations to every $1.84 borrowed from America and other nations. But the inevitable moment came when she could borrow no more, so naturally she ended reparations payments. What is more, as the depression sank to lower depths, she notified the bankers that she could no longer continue to pay heavy interest on her short-term credits.

Mr. Wiggin went to Europe accompanied by a member of the law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell. They went to represent both the American bondholders and the bankers. They arranged the well known "standstill" agreement. Under it the bankers agreed to accept a small payment on their short-term credits, to renew the balance and cut the interest rates. Thus American bondholders were saved. But in due course the Nazis came into power. They announced that Germany could not continue to pay, even on the bonds. Again Sullivan and Cromwell represented American bondholders in Europe. But this time they came

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home empty-handed. The short-term credits of the bankers were kept alive, but interest payments on German bonds, in spite of various earlier agreements, were suspended. No one blames Sullivan and Cromwell for this. I do not know enough of what went on to know whether they represented our bondholders well or ill. But I would like to inquire who hired them to represent the American bondholders? And pending the answer to that question, I would like to narrate another little incident.

One of the German corporations that borrowed from Americans on long-term bonds was the North German Lloyd Steamship Company. And in due course this company suspended payment of interest. An American lady, Katherine Perry, filed suit in the Municipal Court of New York City to compel the North German Lloyd to pay her the interest due on $1,000 worth of German bonds. In a sense this lady was really representing American bondholders. While asserting her own claim she was in truth asserting the claims of all those who held similar bonds against this and all other German corporations. She was doing in a different forum what the firm of Sullivan and Cromwell was supposed to be doing abroad.

But the North German Lloyd vigorously resisted the claim on the ground that the company is a German corporation, subject to the laws of the Reich; that the German government has declared a moratorium; that those laws are not confiscatory; that Germany is really doing nothing more than our own government is doing in protecting debtors, and that the German company is already trying to work out a plan to deal equitably with this debt. The point of interest, however, is that it was the firm of Sullivan and Cromwell who appeared as counsel for the North German Lloyd Company.

I have not the slightest doubt that all this, in our tangled and not so easily understood civilization, is entirely all right. But would it not be better if the bondholders had somebody else representing them? And again I ask, how did this firm come to represent the bondholders?

Once before I pointed to one of the members of this firm on the committee named by our extraordinary Secretary of Commerce to study the Securities Act. Why the Secretary of Commerce should have been so industrious about this matter I do not know. I do know that the Assistant Secretary of Commerce is a law professor who occasionally got employed in lucrative cases by this firm of Sullivan and Cromwell and that the firm of Sullivan and Cromwell represents a very large number of clients who are vitally interested in amending the Securities Act. When the Act was being passed this law firm was the most industrious agent in its efforts to keep the law from being given some of its most effective teeth, and since its passage the firm has been equally industriously trying to draw some of those teeth. Hence it was surprising to see its friend and former recipient of its beneficence, Mr. Dickinson, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce, and one of its members, Mr. Dean, both on a government committee to study and recommend changes in the Securities Act.

It's all quite right and proper. No doubt this firm is an excellent one and looks with sedulous and ceaseless vigilance after the interests of its variegated clientele. I can give it a testimonial. But I cannot help repeating that it would be better if somebody else were looking after the bondholders, and it would be well if the Department of Commerce hereafter named somewhat less interested persons as the representatives of the American people to study their interests.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

Doing Good by Catherine

IF THE personal lives of queens and seneschals continue to flit across the screen at the present rate, it will get so a person can sit before any given one and call his shots —here an eye-dimming address to the mob before the balcony, there a bugle point and the guard stomps through, and always somewhere around the corner a good ringing allusion to the tillers of earth. In the main, I have come to infer, a ruler divides his time between wondering whom to go to bed with and whether the peasants have got enough hay to eat.

"Catherine the Great," the latest of the royalty spectacles, wears all the decorations of the order. (It is still at the Astor Theatre in New York City.) What is more important about it, however, is that while it rumples the skirts of history in the usual embarrassing way, it still has a credible plot to show for itself. To make a tremulous virginal creature out of Catherine II, who even before coming to power had run through something like 17 percent of the male population, is a sanitary measure which might cause a twitter in the lecture halls. But to develop an adoring bride through humiliation and despair into a woman of action, a responsible leader, is an undertaking which—shorn of its inevitable fustian—I am able to respect. If the continuity succeeds, though, it is not because of the direction, which seems hackneyed enough, but because of the solid support of Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Flora Robson and Elizabeth Bergner (the Grand Duke, the Old Empress and Catherine).

About Miss Bergner, I am made hesitant by the fact of her stage reputation abroad (especially as reported in the correspondence of Charles Morgan), and by the recent coöperation of all concerned in tossing her name to the clouds. Certainly she does an impressive job of work here; but just as certainly she falls quite short of magnificence, or anything like it. She is a little too much a virtuoso of the eyes for one thing, tending toward a dilation of pupil which concentrates attention unpleasantly; she has overstated her final scene, for another, and has seemed occasionally careless of her carriage. There are some things—some states of mind or spirit—in which she is superb, and I remember her most gratefully for a wedding scene in which every facial and bodily line conveyed a mixture of shy pride and wonder, hesitation and eagerness, which must approximate creative purity. Then, too, there is the later banquet episode, where she pokes at her food in the clearest statement of dignity in scared humiliation that I have ever seen. But the excellence is restricted to certain moods, and her accomplishment in this one film calls up a corrective to critics in the way of ragtime epitaph of happy (if obscure) memory: "Now I'm not the best, though it's well understood, Ev'thing that I do, I sure do good." . . .

Mr. Fairbanks does a surprisingly effective interpretation of Peter III. Whether from shrewd casting, whether from his own intelligent conception of the character, he is able

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to veer between petulant imperiousness and hysteria, insensibility and cunning, in a manner which convinces and even wrings a drop of sympathy from an essentially unsympathetic role. That he sticks to his guns here rather than attempting the Great Lover has caused concern in some quarters, but should go far to cancel such lack of personal dignity as still shows through. I can give the heartiest praise to Miss Robson, whose tottering, shrieky, sensual Elizabeth filled me with a sense of a living body—something not often experienced on the screen, somehow. Working within the limits of a subsidiary part, she yet managed to give the clearest and least exceptionable performance of the picture.

On the whole, I am thankful for "Catherine the Great." Whatever its shortcomings, it represents genuine entertainment compared with Hollywood's choices in the past weeks —"Moulin Rouge," for example, or "Nana," introducing Anna Sten's full-blown personality and emotional incompetence. The only saddening thing is that the hope which springs is considerably dampened by the fact that it is not a Hollywood but a British product.

OTIS C. FERGUSON.

Texts and Murals

AT LAST the Rockefellers have effaced Rivera's murals from Radio City's walls, and I have heard that there is some difficulty in finding another artist who is ready to step in where Rivera was dismissed. Though the controversy will soon die down, that blank expanse of plaster is dedicated to its memory; it remains for a time as a tribute to Rivera and the cause of artist against real-estate operator. It was evident that Radio City officials had been disturbed by the criticism of their huge monument to waste and American "prosperity." Rivera poured salt into the wound. The victory was his.

Now is the time, however, to see Rivera's work in fresh perspective, to see again that easy, fluid talent release its energy in panorama at the New Workers' School on Fourteenth Street in New York City. With nerves relaxed, see a large picture book: the slave ships harbored at American shores; the Revolution, 1776, the Boston massacre, John Brown, the Civil War; Whitman and Thoreau and the rise of Morgan's power; Karl Marx and after him flashes of the World War and the horrible faces of old men who signed the Treaty at Versailles; then huge machines with rounded steel parts resembling the glandular system in patent-medicine advertisements, and beyond them Mexican workers, and crowds at Union Square who seem to be quarreling over points in party doctrine. The panorama closes with a camera shot of Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky—to their left is Hitler wearing a pansy and shouting into a microphone.

All this is clever work. If we think of it in terms of journalism, it is the best thing of its kind in contemporary America. The entire set of pictures would reproduce well in black and white. Bound together in a book they would make a spirited illustration of the artist's thesis.

Rivera, showman and political storm center, has come a long way from the mural painter whose work flowered from the soil of the Mexican revolution. That work today seems like the creation of another man, a man who was less worldly, less adroit, less facile. The present Rivera reached a climax in the Radio City battle. In the controversy that followed one almost forgot that if Rivera had frescoed a dozen Lenins on Rockefeller walls, the murals would have remained a static, complex, "literary" version of what the artist saw. Barring the heat of controversy, I doubt if a single D.A.R. could have been unnerved by them. Chances are that the hypothetical American who visited Radio City to see its murals would have turned his mind to solving the puzzle that Rivera's work presented, would have tried to disentangle his thesis and interpret it to friends. The real issue was raised when the Rockefellers dismissed Rivera. The blank space is now a better testimonial to the cause of art and revolution than the work itself would have been.

I don't propose to be dogmatic about the rules of mural painting. Simplicity is perhaps not the first of them—many of us can remember the symphonic grandeur displayed by a Michelangelo. But in Rivera's case, his effectiveness depended upon primitive narration in a painter's medium. The large forms that he employed in his earlier work established a premise in modern mural painting. He has now broken his own laws. As his designs grow more elaborate, they reveal less of the artist's discrimination between the visual symbol and the translation of that symbol into words. If we contrast his latest work with Orozco's murals at Dartmouth, we see how far a literary and complex imagination has upset his scale of values. Orozco has converted his ideas into permanent symbols which are related to painting as well as to the life he sees about him. Rivera, no less revolutionary, is content merely to illustrate the text of class warfare in America.

HORACE GREGORY.

CORRESPONDENCE

Prosperity, F.O.B. Chicago

SIR: While the N.R.A. and the Consumers' Advisory Board are turning handsprings in Washington, and everyone is shouting because commodity prices have gone too high or not high enough, we out in the provinces have just finished thumbing through the new mail-order catalogues. Doubtless there is much meat in the new mail-order catalogues for the economist and other pale men who understand and practise the dark art, but to us it is rather like gall-flavored sawdust.

It is enough to notice that if the Missus gets a new cotton tub-fast percale, broadcloth, voile or print dress for the strawberry festival at the church or the family reunion in the grove, and spends only the amount she spent last year for the same material, she will be arrayed in only two-thirds of a dress. Work shirts for men have gone up and up, and although there is little or no work for honest, willing hands, the price of work gloves has doubled. Cotton sheets that were forty-five and sixty-two cents when the last catalogue was new are now sixty-five and eighty-nine cents. Pillow cases (cotton) have gone from twelve and fourteen cents apiece to fifteen and twenty-three cents. Cotton ticking has climbed from fourteen cents a yard to approximately twenty-two cents. Cotton blanket-sheets have gone in a single bound from eighty-nine cents to an even $1, and cotton blankets at the same price have shot up to $1.29. Even diaper cloth (which might be listed as capital goods by the family heads) has increased more than two cents on the yard. Rayon and rayon-cotton materials are steadily mounting. Gingham has increased more than 50 percent on the yard. Suits for men and boys are still going up, and women's clothing seems to have no top. Arctics for men, it should

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be recorded as a matter of fairness, are about 10 percent lower, but arctics and overshoes for the feminine foot are 30 percent higher!

Drugs, sanitary articles, musical instruments, radios and phonograph records are lower than last year or about the same. Whereas phonograph records cost the musically inclined about twenty cents apiece last year, fiber records (slightly inferior, of course) are obtainable for something like three cents apiece. Kitchen stoves are somewhat lower, as are tires for the family bus. But rugs and carpet and linoleum take up the slack by advancing firmly. Furniture holds its own, advancing at one point, but falling back at another—perhaps.

Most of the heavier farm equipment available at mail-order houses is neither cheaper nor dearer in terms of the dollar. Incubators and brooders are a little lower, or the same. Poultry netting, known to farmer as well as city slicker as "chicken wire," is no longer sixty-nine cents a bale; this spring it'll cost a dime more. Barbed wire has increased, too, twenty-nine cents on the bale to be exact. But there's one item of hope. This year's shovel and manure fork will be approximately twenty to thirty cents cheaper.

Grafton, W. Va. F. Por Graham.

How Towns Are Built

SIR: Mr. John T. Moutoux, probably not being familiar with the working of an organization as large as ours, manages to convey the impression ["The T. V. A. Builds a Town," The New Republic, January 31], that the town of Norris is to be built more or less exclusively on the ideas of one person. Actually, as most of your readers will realize without explanation, the architect, being responsible for the design and supervision of buildings only, is not an outstanding important unit in a vast coöperative enterprise. Ideas are contributed by every member of the organization, by consultants and by many others. Matters of policy, as to whether a town should be built, where and of what kind, are determined by the Board of Directors. Their decisions settle the far-reaching questions of land policy, housing standards, organization and expected income levels of the new town. The physical planning rests with the Division of Land Planning and Housing, of which Earle S. Draper is the director—and subject to his judgment, the Sections of Town Planning, headed by Tracy B. Augur, of Engineering, headed by James W. Bradner, Jr., and the Architectural, headed by the writer, coöperate to design the town, with every member of our forces adding his best to make it a success.

Several other errors of statement or emphasis occur in the article. While these and the unjust allocation of credit might not interest your readers, it should be worth while to point out the basically erroneous impression conveyed by the article that any modern enterprise, but especially one with large public interest at stake and with uncharted seas ahead, can rest solely upon the shoulders of any of its officials. It rests on the enthusiasm, hard work and freely exchanged ideas of men and women who regard each other as mates in a common adventure, each carrying his own share of responsibility rather than as superiors and subordinates mechanically performing their allotted tasks. If the town of Norris will come up to Mr. Moutoux's glowing description, it will be because this spirit pervaded the organization that had built it.

R. A. Wank,
Chief of Architectural Section,
Knoxville, Tenn. Division of Land Planning and Housing.

Tobacco Goes to Blazes

SIR: An interesting application of the New Deal to farmers in this dark-fired tobacco belt should obtain some publicity.

In December the markets opened at a disastrously low price average. A similar condition had existed in the bright or flue-cured belt earlier in the winter, and the markets were closed, the federal government collaborated, a parity price was set and upon reopening of the markets farmers obtained an excellent price for bright leaf. A similar movement was started in Virginia. Conferences were held with state and federal authorities, the markets were closed. The Department of Agriculture immediately prepared a tobacco-reduction contract for presentation to farmers. This was widely accepted. It was understood that the government would set parity prices on all grades to ensure a living return upon the poundage offered in warehouses. Farmers proceeded to the preparation of their tobacco in the barns with some confidence in the results of the government's intervention. . . . The markets opened last week. The prices were lower than ever. Many loads barely paid expenses of selling and carriage. Through a new ruling put forth by the government under which tobacco [of such grade that] buyers would offer as low as $1.35 per hundredweight might be passed [below the parity price], many deliveries were passed by entirely, tobacco of relatively good quality being pushed into the lower grades. The official graders very obviously scanned the leaf with the interests of the buyers in mind, the general comment of experienced farmers being that they had never seen tobacco graded so low or so unjustly. No one here can explain why the government fell in with tobacco buyers, no one knows what collusion or indifference may have produced this result. . . .

The depression has never been deeper than it is here at this moment. Every item we buy has had its price raised by governmental stimulus. Bankruptcy, decay of farms in a relatively fertile area inhabited by an excellent old stock, still further lowering of living and cultural levels, denial of needed medical attention, starvation or pauperage—that is what faces us, and not a sound is made by those who call themselves public servants. Over this whole area the deepest gloom is spreading under the canopy of the New Deal. . . .

Massinacac, Va. William Shepard.

Pharmaceutical Correction

SIR: A pharmacological error appears in the January 24 issue of The New Republic, in the item on van der Lubbe, concerning his being given scopolamin: "A profuse running of the nose is another characteristic symptom."

Scopolamin has just the reverse action. It very powerfully suppresses all secretions of the respiratory tract, from the nose to the bronchioles.

New York City. Ralph Steffens.

Extracts from Letters

NORMAN THOMAS writes us opposing a petition now being circulated to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Dr. John R. Mott. "Dr. Mott," Mr. Thomas writes, "was in charge of the war activities of the Y.M.C.A. during the World War. . . . He supported the entry of the United States into a war which we all know now to have been imperialist in origin. . . . He was a member of the American Commission to Russia which did its best to keep Russia in the World War. . . . So far as I am aware he has never made any public apology or explanation of his wartime activities. He certainly has not stood out in conspicuous leadership in a determined fight against war and fascism and the things in our national structure and economic life which lead to them. For him to be awarded the Nobel Prize will be a final proof that the prize is meaningless, or worse than meaningless."

We have received the following telegram from Mr. B. J. Field, secretary of the general strike committee of the Amalgamated Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union: "Striking hotel workers earnestly appeal for help. Great privations due cold. Relief imperative. Give immedately enabling continuance fight against intolerable conditions. Send contributions to J. Assel, treasurer, 915 Eighth Avenue, New York City."

Caroline S. Lutz, the official biographer of F. Hopkinson Smith, asks us to urge all our readers who have any sources of information, engineering, artistic, literary or personal about him to communicate with her at the University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia.

In behalf of those anti-Nazis who need help, regardless of race, creed or politics, the International Relief Association, 11 West Forty-second Street, New York City, appeals to the readers of The New Republic to give material and moral support to those German men and women who are being so sorely tried.

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One Moment Alit

Four Saints in Three Acts, by Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson. Forty-fourth Street Theatre, February 20, 1934.

MR. Paul Rosenfeld has already written of the Hartford première of "Four Saints in Three Acts," and to his comment this is added, as more could well be added to this. In my opinion the production of this opera is the most important event of the theatre season: it is the first free, pure theatre that I have seen so far.

"Four Saints in Three Acts" has been described, reviewed and broadcast; and Miss Gertrude Stein's method of writing, with its word tricks, rhythms, buttons, anapæsts and so on, its meanings submerging and emerging like a dolphin, has been well known for twenty years. The general news of "Four Saints in Three Acts" has called it the Stein opera. Since the acclaim of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" this makes better publicity, but it is, also, just. The spring and melodic fantasy of the music, the scenario, the choreography and the décor arise quite profoundly and organically from the piece Miss Stein has written. The alternations of rococo frolic and sensuous intensity are paralleled in her text. Once that is said, we must hasten to add that the actual words themselves in this opera production are a very secondary part of it. They are adapted to singing, but numbers and alphabets would not infrequently do as well. They do give Mr. Virgil Thomson a happy libretto verbally and, in an elusive manner, emotionally. But it is true of him that his gifts include the uncommon one of the marriage of singing and word, and that his phrases flutter and descend into the stage scene very much as the phrases of the Stein text also do. Now and then a provocative word or phrase or a sudden bloc of emotional drama draws outward to engage the ear and to elicit inquiry. But in the main the words go their way regardless. This should not trouble people who are accustomed to endless operas, with arias, quartettes or dramatic dialogues of which they understand not one word of the Italian, German and often little of the English, where it is English—I heard Caruso once when he struck a pin at Miss Farrar's waist, sing a whole air, O Cruel Pin, with exactly the same applause from the audience. Nor should it trouble people who have always known by instinct or cultivation that Mother Goose is better poetry than Longfellow—"Hickory, dickory, dock," for example, which at least lives in the ear, as compared to "Be not like dumb, driven cattle," which is born dead. And finally it can be said that, whereas often in singing you hope to be spared hearing the words, Mr. Thomson's line and phrase often make you anxious to know what the word was.

The character of the music is neither "modern" nor traditional; it releases us from any decision beyond fantasy and freedom or delight in itself. This music is melodic, though always briefly; it flits lightly, flutters, or dwells for a moment poignantly, and it is capable of many flying lyricisms. It has in it elements of jazz, pre-war melody, the ballet and, among others, something that suggests the Gregorian trimmed down shall we say to Lulli, somewhat as Titian to Watteau—at any rate there seems often present a certain finality out of France. The text itself must have left most of what we now see on the stage to be created by stage artists. Mr. John Houseman in the directing and, especially, Mr. Frederick Ashton in the choreography worked admirably. Indeed, Mr. Ashton's contribution might easily be undervalued, though almost anyone should see how the brief formal ballet of the three couples, with its kind of Galatea, sea-nymph theme, is enchanting. The décor of Miss Florine Stettheimer, in the second act a trifle monotonous, seemed perfect to the whole production. It was witty, delicious and iridescent, based on cellophane and modern painting; a sort of whimsical Victorian coquetry with the baroque that is a fresh step in stage décor. Miss Kate Lawson's costumes, not always as well executed as might be, were equally absorbing. The choice of Negro performers was very shrewd. Their relaxation, absence of prosaic, obvious analysis, and technical intuition without trained technical brittleness, were half the battle in such a venture as this. Only Miss Altonell Hines as the *commère* appeared at times to have her tongue in her cheek. The phrase "baroque fantasy" passed out by the producer as a hint to the wise is a good one for this piece of theatre art. Not the great baroque with its solemn magnificence or intellectual variation on the theme, but baroque in its unbroken air of spontaneity, its charming and capricious flights, within the key and hidden unity of the whole.

I wish I knew some way to make sure of being taken seriously when I say that "Four Saints in Three Acts" is as essential theatre the most important event of our season. Bullying clichés and fad talk would help but temporarily, but such an approach is not needed at all. This piece of theatre art is the most important for one reason because it is the most delightful and joyous—and delight is the fundamental in all art great or small—what a joke on the hard-working, hard-punching, expensive and self-evident aspect of the average musical show this whole event is! It is important because it is theatre and flies off the ground. (The only thing comparable to it in this respect is the flying wildness behind the mind of Mr. Henry Hull's Jeeter Lester in "Tobacco Road.") It creates instead of talking about. After all, we can imagine writing a play about a professor's home, a boy's troubles, capitalists, et cetera, good matter enough, just as our legs, our blood, our hats and problems are good. But only now and then in the theatre can we hope for something of the quality of a thing in nature (a tree, a melon, a sheet of water, a flight of birds). The point in such a case is not that it is beautiful or not beautiful, but that it lives in itself, and is in essence a constant surprise; and that from it we make our conclusions and applications, deep or trivial, to art and to delight.

It is horrible to think, if "Four Saints in Three Acts" turns out to be the success, or the vogue, more or less promised by the first night's reception from both the audience and the press in New York, what imitations of it will follow. However they may miss fire, they may some of them have the prosperity with which second-hand imitations often surpass the original. Whatever happens, "Four Saints in Three Acts" cuts the theatre loose from the predictable and the repeated. The scene about the pigeons, so brief and soon gone, is like some singing of little sea shells, and is a case in point. At the same moment it baffles and intrigues imitation, and in that fact precisely lies its theatre life.

STARK YOUNG.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Russian Country Gentleman[1]

A PERIOD of about twenty years, I gather, lay between the appearance of Bunin's famous novel, "The Village," and the appearance in France, two or three years ago, of the first instalment of an autobiographical novel, "The Well of Days." Those twenty years were full of history, needless to say, but they seem hardly at that to account for the sensational difference between the two works—the earlier book suggesting the hand of a kind of Slavic Ed Howe, harsh, disenchanted, malevolent; the later a little suggestive of the reminiscences of some Southern literary lady of the milder and more nostalgic type. Which is the real Bunin—the Ed Howe or the Grace King phase? Or have we here another case of the notorious complexity of the "Russian soul" under Tsarism? Or a case, not unprecedented, of literary schizophrenia? Is the author of "The Well of Days" the Fiona MacLeod of the man who wrote "The Village"?

As a matter of fact, "The Well of Days" itself suggests the answer. In his autobiography, Bunin is naturally writing of his early years and of the life of the class to which he belonged—the life of the lesser land-owning gentry of Central Russia in the later decades of the nineteenth century. It was a class on the downgrade historically, a class from which social significance and political power were gradually slipping; and Bunin looks back upon it and its ways with the astigmatic tenderness with which a Stuart émigré might have looked back upon the life of the High Church squires in the years before the great rebellion. In "The Village," he was not writing of his own class, but of the people amidst whom his relatives had spent their dwindling days—of the peasants who had been "emancipated" from serfdom and the petty villagers who were sometimes enriching themselves at the expense of the impoverished gentry; and he wrote about these people resentfully, coldly, destructively. If a Stuart courtier had written a novel about the Baptist artisans for whom Bunyan was a voice, it would have been something like "The Village." The thing was approximated in "Hudibras," but Butler was an English comic writer, not a Russian romantic.

Both "The Village" and the stories in "The Gentleman from San Francisco" have been accessible to American readers for a decade, but they seem never to have been much read. Now that their author has received the Nobel Prize, two of his books have been reissued, and they are worth reading as samples of the ugly power that social hatred can impart to fiction, especially when it appeals to the past. "The Village"—plotless and somewhat shapeless—is an account of the lives of two brothers, the Krasoffs, the sons of a petty huckster, one of whom sets up in business as the keeper of a village dram-shop and general store, enriches himself by the exercise of every meanness and becomes at length a landowner; the other of whom, poetic and impractical by nature, drifts from one unworthy occupation to another, makes futile stabs at becoming a writer, and finally drifts back to his brother's neighborhood to end his days as manager of one of his brother's lonely estates.

Around these two personages move a number of villagers, artisans, farm hands, peasants, small merchants, servant girls, beggars and adventurers: a repellent collection of coarsely ignorant, shiftless, improvident, avaricious, brutal, superstitious men and women, among whom it would be difficult to find a single virtue unless it was thrown away upon a hostile environment. Nothing seems to redeem this life from the swampy lethargy into which it appears to have sunk; the very animals wheeze and limp and snore away their time, and the weather is as consistently sordid as the human beings: the rain seems never to fall refreshingly, but always dankly and dishearteningly. Both the grasping Tikhon Ilitch and the feckless Kuzma are devoured by a cancer of ennui: "time flowed on in intolerable boredom," we are told; and, to say truth, the book itself has something of the effect of the life it purports to describe.

On the scale of a novel, this sort of thing puts a strain not only on one's attention, but on one's sense of fact, and two or three of the short pieces in "The Gentleman from San Francisco" are more impressive as a result. "A Goodly Life," the autobiographical monologue of a mean-spirited female shopkeeper, who has driven her benefactor to suicide and ruined the life of her own son, has something of the corrosiveness of Lardner's "Haircut." In "A Night Conversation" a group of farm workers, lying about sleepily in the threshing barn where they are spending the night, regale one another with tales of the brutal murders of which they have severally been guilty. "I Say Nothing" is a picture of the gradual disintegration of a rich storekeeper's son, a psychotic who craves to be persecuted and humiliated, and who at last achieves his goal when, battered and disfigured, he becomes a beggar in a church porch. "An Evening in Spring" represents a drunken peasant beating, killing and robbing an old beggar. Not one of these worthies would be out of place in "The Village," but they are easier to believe in one by one than they are in groups. The hatred that gives them a certain lurid vitality in relative isolation, distorts them into monsters when they are gathered together. "The Village," in fact, is a melodrama of manners, and there is no reason for denying its peculiar force as such. But no one could mistake it for sober realism.

To turn from these fictions to "The Well of Days" is a little like turning from "Main Street" to "Friendship Village." Gone are the chill rains and the evil odors and the running sores that composed the lives of the villagers and the peasants of old Russia, and gone are the moral obliquities that, we are told, deserved such rewards: here are only sunny afternoons, and springlike fragrances, and moonlit winter nights; and here are distinguished elderly ladies, and generous, good-looking, improvident squires and bewitching young girls of genteel families that have seen better days—and a young poet who dreams of greatness, rejoices in the possession of what his father calls his "beautiful soul," and debauches the wife of a saddler. We are to believe that the lives of such people as the Arsenievs—the family of the narrator—were as humane, as graceful, as chivalric, as the lives of their inferiors were nasty and brutish. Perhaps this would be credible if the expressions of class feeling

[1] The Village, by Ivan Bunin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

The Gentleman from San Francisco, by Ivan Bunin. Translated by D. H. Lawrence and Others. New York: Thomas Seltzer. $1.

The Gentleman from San Francisco, by Ivan Bunin. Translated by Bernard Guilbert Guerney. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

The Well of Days, by Ivan Bunin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

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were not so ingenuous as they are (the "agreeable . . . feeling of our superiority when the coachman outdrove some peasants, also decked out and also going to the feast"); and if the vanity and the self-consciousness of the narrator were not equally ingenuous. Speaking of the spring of his sixteenth year, "there was," he says, "the consciousness of my abilities, my youthful purity, my noble impulses, truthfulness, contempt for every meanness."

"The Village" and the tales are not based, it is clear, on a consistent misanthropy, on the sort of cynicism that rends the self as well as the rest of humanity; they are based on a class antagonism that is consistent with the lushest sentimentality, with the pleasantest self-pity, and the most romantic sense of the past. It all depends on the "set" you are writing about. There is no schizophrenia here. NEWTON ARVIN.

Nordic Propaganda

The Conquest of a Continent, by Madison Grant. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 393 pages. $3.

THE PUBLISHER'S letter announcing Madison Grant's new book prepares us well for what to expect: "National problems today are, at bottom, race problems. Herr Hitler has stated that problem for Germany—and is working out his own solution. We in America have our own problem—but we do not seem to recognize its seriousness." It is a book of Nordic propaganda, without a word substantiating the claim that the bodily differences between European races are in any way culturally significant.

Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, in his Introduction, announces his unshaken faith in the ultimately beneficial recognition of racial values. As scientists we are not accustomed to accept a confession of faith as proof. Professor Osborn has never given us a scientific proof of his attitude. That it is not evidence but faith which determines his opinion is shown by his letter written on May 20, 1924, to The New York Times, in which he says, "Columbus, from his portraits, and from his busts, authentic or not [!], was clearly of Nordic ancestry. Turning to Poland [!] . . . Kossuth of Hungary was a Calvinist and of noble family, and there is a presumption in favor of his being a Nordic."

As for Madison Grant, notwithstanding his claim to the contrary, he does not discriminate among culture, language and race. He dogmatically asserts that culture is determined by race, although nobody has ever succeeded in giving conclusive proof of a close interrelation between the two. In his first chapter, on the cradle of mankind, he claims that differences of the order found between human races, if found among lower mammals, would be more than sufficient to constitute not only separate species, but even subgenera; this claim will hardly be accepted by zoölogists. He says rightly that race is hard to define; hard enough in regard to bodily characteristics, but he includes off-hand mental characteristics, "which are more difficult to classify, but which are distinctly typical of specific human groups." This is all he has to say about his fundamental thesis.

His first chapter indicates well the careless handling of facts that characterizes the whole book. Thus, Mr. Grant maintains that civilization itself—that is, agriculture and the domestication of animals—arose in West Central Asia, forgetting that there is no way of connecting the same inventions in the New World with those of the Old. The positive statements that people of Alpine race spoke languages related to Turki, and that all the people speaking Aryan languages were originally Nordics, are mere speculations. The assertion that Negroes are all long-headed is wrong, for a broad band of short-headed people extends from south of the Central Sudan to the west coast of Lake Tanganyika. That America was peopled by tall Mongols with a slight admixture of Alpine, is a mere supposition. The derivation of the Polish Jews from the Russian Khazars is fantastic, since we know that the Khazars were practically annihilated and that West-European and Mediterranean Jews were called to Poland by Boleslav in 1264 and that their freedom under Casimir the Great led to their general distribution throughout the country.

The whole book is based on the claim that the Nordics are a superior race, that their intermingling with Alpines and Mediterraneans is undesirable. Every historical event, if it can be done by some twist, is explained on this basis. It is claimed that at the time of Spanish greatness the predominant blood in the Peninsula was still Gothic and that the adventurers who went overseas and were lost to the race were of this blood; but when the Moors defeated the Visigoths the blood of the latter had been greatly mixed with that of the subject races, "resulting perhaps in a weakening of their fighting power." Contradictions, when convenient, do not trouble the author. The Nordics, he says, are highly nomadic in habit, while the Alpines stick close to the land and breed persistently. At the same time the steady increase of round-skulled Alpines everywhere in Central Europe in recent centuries "is one of the most ominous facts that confront us," and they *migrate* in hordes to the shores of America. The author condemns the mixture of European races, but the mixture of Nordics and Mediterraneans in the British Islands "may possibly be one of the few advantageous racial crossings." Then why not in America?

I do not believe that the serious scientific questions involved have ever presented themselves to either Professor Osborn or to Mr. Madison Grant. First of all, "What is the Nordic race?" A more careful study than the one Mr. Grant gives to it proves that the only element common to the group as defined by him is loss of pigmentation such as occurs in domesticated animals. E. Fischer and B. Klatt have proved conclusively that blue eyes and blondness are phenomena of domestication, and Eduard Hahn and the reviewer have pointed out again and again that man is the oldest domesticated form. Depigmentation occurs independent of genetic relations in domesticated animals such as horses, rabbits and pigs. When it occurs it is hereditary. On account of the great diversity in bodily forms of the blonds in Western and Eastern Europe and the occurrence of partial depigmentation among the Mongolids, we may suspect that this process has occurred independently among a number of races. There is no reason to assume that the hereditary stubnose, one of the features that differentiate the east European from the west European blonds, is less significant than their common hereditary blondness. Neither does the distribution of blood groups favor the assumption of a single racial origin. We should have to know much more than we do about the hereditary stability of body traits in order to understand the significance of local forms.

Nobody has ever proved that blondness determines mental characteristics. In fact Karl Pearson's elaborate attempt to determine whether a relation between bodily build and mental character exists in a population has shown that there is no such relation. This refers, of course, to a population, not to particular selected families that may have hereditary biologically determined mental characteristics. In regard to blondness, the example of domesticated animals is in-

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structive. In blond domesticated animals we do not look for a mentality superior to that of more strongly pigmented strains.

Students of racial characteristics should realize that the analogy between modern races of domesticated animals and those of mankind does not hold good. The former exhibit decided bodily and mental characteristics. The latter have never been developed by inbreeding and conscious selection in such a manner that a similar uniformity has been attained. Even among most closely inbred and selected animal series, raised by mating generation after generation a male and a female of the same litter, distinct lines can be established by separating the strains and breeding for specific qualities. In other words even in this case uniformity of heritable characteristics is not established. How much less in the races of man in which crossing is the rule, inbreeding always imperfect and selection at a minimum! The well known laws of heredity are such that a variety of bodily and mental characteristics—in so far as the latter are biologically determined—must be expected in every population, even when depigmentation has developed a certain degree of uniformity.

The author has traced with a good deal of trouble and probably a fair degree of accuracy the history of immigration and inner migration without giving any proof that would establish the validity of his interpretation.

FRANZ BOAS.

The Good Soldier's Return

It Was the Nightingale: An Autobiography, by Ford Madox Ford. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 382 pages. $3.

THIS BOOK is a sequel to "Return to Yesterday." It takes up the narrative, abandoned in the earlier book at the outbreak of War, from the date when Mr. Ford, discharged from the army, established himself as a pig breeder in Sussex; and describes how he shook the dust of England from his feet, edited The Transatlantic Review and finally settled in Provence. It is more autobiographical than its predecessor, and the *dramatis personae* are considerably less numerous. There are a few of the sketches, lively to the point of caricature, which made "Return to Yesterday" one of the most entertaining autobiographies of the past few years; but in general the spotlights are concentrated on the author himself. Mr. Ford is a master of the conversational style, and the writing is vivid, easy and unpretentious. A conversational effect is aimed at, also, by means of lengthy and numerous digressions. Mr. Ford asserts that all of them are deliberately introduced for artistic reasons: in this book Mr. Ford's artistry has somewhat overshot the mark.

"It Was the Nightingale" is inferior to "Return to Yesterday," but the two books together are written with such bluff geniality and present impressions of so many eminent personalities that they will probably survive their author. The fact that a number of the details which Mr. Ford claims to remember are geographically or chronologically impossible, and that one suspects a large proportion of his anecdotes to be the fruit more of imagination than of memory, scarcely diminishes their value. If Mr. Ford occasionally caricatures, he is never ungenerous or malicious; and if his reminiscences do not have the truth of history, they have a truth of a more important kind, in that they illuminate the characters of the individuals concerned.

H. B. PARKES.

Two Books on Russia

Youth in Soviet Russia, by Klaus Mehnert. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 270 pages. $2.

Red Medicine: Socialized Health in Soviet Russia, by Sir Arthur Newsholme, M.D., and John A. Kingsbury. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 341 pages. $2.50.

WOMAN admits membership in Red organization" . . . "Sheriff accuses youths of agitating" . . . So run headings in American newspapers when the youth of America happens to be engaged in radical activities. One has to shake oneself to recollect that young people holding the same views as some of these "Reds" are among the most respected and sought-after leaders of the new Russia —the boys and girls Klaus Mehnert refers to as the aristocracy and the élite of a nation of 160 millions.

Mehnert is himself a young German who has lived a good part of his life in Russia, speaks the language and has many close personal friends among Russians. He lives with students in their hostels, sleeps on straw in the barns of collective farms, travels "hard," shares the quarters and the lives of the youth of the country for some months every year. And his simply told and vivid little book tells of their aims and hopes, their plays and books, their discussions on love, marriage and morals. One sees clearly from his conversations and the scenes of plays which he has translated, how different from our own is the attitude on some life problems of these young people, who form the vanguard of a hundred millions who have never known a world under capitalism. One sees clearly also how they rise to the occasion of being the rulers of their country, of knowing what they want, and of feeling that in spite of bumps and ruts on the road, they are "getting there."

The book points out the dangers of the new world too, but in proportion, so that each confusion does not lead to the conclusion jumped at by some outside observers, "So communism has failed." Mehnert shows the dangers of exaggerated specialization, of insufficient education of teachers and other professionals, of a certain sameness in much of the education and of too much work. The chapter on "Morality and Culture" gives a fresh and humorous picture of this extraordinary society growing all ways at once, experimenting with age-old traditions as our schoolboys might play with marbles; young and serious students so dogmatically certain of how human beings are going to change. The only comment one can make on these certainties is the comment of a recent American visitor: "America is a land of unlimited possibilities, Russia a land of unlimited impossibilities." Klaus Mehnert has described concretely and fairly both the possibilities and the impossibilities of the young Soviet citizen, as interestingly and intimately as anyone who has yet written about this country that is an acid test of all our thinking.

The charm and the importance of "Red Medicine" lie in the fact that the two medical scientists who wrote this report on Soviet care for health are scientific in their approach to all Russian phenomena. The most ardent Communist will not object to such unfavorable criticisms as they make, for they show always the causes, the extenuating circumstances. They also realize that one can understand no side of Soviet life without knowing the theories on which it is built, its general structure, governmental methods and institutions, and some outline of its history. Thus, almost half the book is devoted to a general account

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which is extremely readable, even by those who know the subject matter well, because of its fresh and delightfully personal, almost naïve (politically speaking) approach.

The first paragraph of the Preface sums up the authors' conclusions in the form of a statement that the wealth of detail and investigation in the book bears out:

> Soviet Russia has decided that the health of the individual is the concern of society as a whole. . . . It is the one nation in the world which has undertaken to set up and operate a complete organization designed to provide preventive and curative medical care for every man, woman and child within its borders.

The authors visited every health institution on a 9,000-mile tour, talked everywhere to nurses, doctors, professors, children, travelers, officials, factory workers, American correspondents. They took the trouble to find out what they were going to study before they went, and so avoided the childish mistakes even well known philosophers have perpetrated against objective investigation. The comment on the philosophy of work in Soviet Russia shows their understanding:

> Labor changes the worker's personality: . . . it becomes the ideal of service for the community . . . and a central point of life . . . rest and recreation, preventive care and medical treatment are in their right setting when they are regarded as adjutants of work.

They hit on the underlying causes for the biggest changes with extraordinary insight (or maybe it isn't extraordinary; maybe they merely demonstrate what the flower of culture could be when it is cultured). They see that the family is not breaking up because Bolsheviks, with diabolic hatred of motherhood, seek to end family life, but because club life has become fairly general. They refer very simply—and it is a complete answer to most "liberal" objections to Soviet Russia—to the training of youth in civic philosophy "which, Russia being a Communist state, is naturally Communism." This is decidedly a book to read, not only to learn about Russia, but to see how gentlemen can report it.

ELLA WINTER.

Debt and Index Numbers

Debt and Production, by Bassett Jones. New York: The John Day Company. 158 pages. $2.

Horses and Apples, by Bassett Jones. New York: The John Day Company. 132 pages. $1.

IN "Debt and Production" Mr. Bassett Jones tries to describe in a highly scientific manner the operating characteristics of our industrial economy as seen from an engineering point of view. The book fails to satisfy the great expectations it is likely to arouse. Mr. Jones makes some valuable contributions to the mathematical treatment of growth curves, but he pushes his method too far. Carried away by his admiration for mathematics and his eagerness to apply quantitative measurements to economic phenomena, he makes the statement that mathematics is man's only precise means of expression. Even if this is true—and I regard it as a questionable idea—Mr. Jones forgets that mathematics is like a meat-chopper: no more meat will come out than you put in. And this explains exactly why the book is disappointing. It contains no original research. It is an admirably constructed machine, but no fresh meat goes into it. Mr. Jones accepts the statistical data as he

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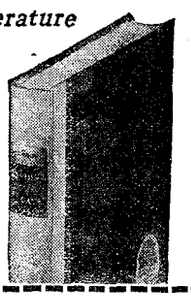

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receives them from the economists, believing that nothing better may be had. In this belief he is mistaken. The basic material on which the economists have built their studies is available to the student, even though it may not be complete. It is as fresh as ever—why shouldn't it be used?

If somebody asks you to finish a half-completed crossword puzzle in which a number of mistakes have been made, the first thing to do is to erase the letters already filled in and make a new beginning. But to do so you need a new idea, a picture of how the diagram has to be filled out. The same holds true for economics. Mr. Jones seems to feel a certain contempt for "sociological, philosophical, psychological and metaphysical" theorizing; he maintains that only the measurable is real for science. But even measuring starts with a theory—the theory of observation, which must be built on some idea of what the thing is that has to be measured. Once the measurements have been established, mathematical calculations will prove whether the idea you started with is valid. But the idea is the beginning of everything. Without an idea the mere application of mathematics to statistical data will lead to nothing.

What is production? Mr. Jones does not define the term, does not make clear what idea he has in his mind regarding it, if he has any at all. He simply applies mathematics to the index numbers of the economists. These numbers, as far as production statistics are concerned, will probably defy any real comparison with exact quantitative measurements. To arrive at a genuine engineering theory of debt and production, the engineer would have to begin by discarding them altogether. He would have to start from the bottom with the fundamental qualities and quantities of the system, and he would have to try to find every item which was likely to determine the result—not merely a few of them.

This Mr. Jones has failed to do. How can an engineer write a book on production under modern conditions without devoting at least a chapter to considering the influence of power? Mr. Jones makes a casual reference to this point, but does not develop it. Instead, he follows the other road, which may lead to Technocracy, but no farther.

In reality there are at least three, if not four, different *kinds* of production, which are functionally interrelated as cause and effect. If they are treated as a whole, as Mr. Jones has done in Chapter IV of his Appendix, the result is meaningless. Moreover, there are at least two different kinds of debt. The first is related to the flow of material through the productive system. The second is related to productive *capacity,* on the assumption that this capacity is working at a full load. The two different kinds of debt are functionally incomparable. What does it mean then to state that the quantity of debt at any time must have a one-to-one relation to the volume of production at that time? "Debt"—in terms of what—changing dollars? "Production"—what kind? In terms of what?—index numbers?

Mr. Jones's method leads him to the observation that something called "debt" grows in a certain manner in time. Without further inquiry, he takes it for granted that an observed fact is a necessity inherent in the system. But a fact is not always a necessity; it may be dependent on some particular conditions. Indeed, it is dangerous to make any assertions about the performance of the economic system until all its details, and notably the influence of power, have been studied in the proper coördination in time, and until we have studied their functional interrelationship with money irrespective of time. If this is done, the whole structure of technocratic dogma will probably vanish, and

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we shall find the system working as it did in the days of the Pharaohs—in principle, that is—but with the added intensity made possible by the application of power and the division of labor.

But even though the basis of technocratic dogma may disappear on further study, Bassett Jones's book has some valuable features which should not be overlooked. Among these is the significance he attaches to what he calls "the rate of growth" and his observation that between 1910 and 1920 this rate began to decline. This decline can be verified by other methods than those which Mr. Jones has used. Still more important, although it leads Mr. Jones and the Technocrats to a wrong conclusion, is his demonstration of the growing burden of maintaining and replacing manufacturing plant, and the evidence he presents that the process must lead to a sort of self-destruction. Finally, Mr. Jones delivers a blow at the popular notion of the limitless possibilities of production. This notion is, of course, absurd, but it still plays a part in some discussions. Should the book destroy this fallacy once and for all in the popular mind, it will have abundantly justified its existence.

L. R. NIENSTAEDT.

P. S. Since the above was written, Mr. Jones has himself offered the most effective criticism of his own work in a little book called "Horses and Apples," a study of index numbers. He says in part, "So when we find given in books such statements as *total production,* etc., the reader is justified in wondering how all such things and many more were combined so as to obtain a total." But this is exactly what Mr. Jones himself has done in his first book, of which his present seems to destroy every foundation for the final conclusions. L. R. N.

Books in Brief

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

MORE OR LESS ABOUT MYSELF, by Margot, Countess of Oxford and Asquith. *New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 318 pages. $4.*

Margot Asquith's new book, written in 1931, is made up of the opinions, quotations, character descriptions, letters and considerations of herself from the public's point of view which she forgot to insert in her previous books or now wishes to emphasize—a volume of footnotes to a life. It is filled with great names, as significant in England as they are bewildering in America. She gives estimates of most English statesmen from Gladstone and Disraeli to Lloyd George and Churchill as orators, intellects, religious or anti-religious influences, friends and lovers. The War breaks out at the beginning of the book, at the end of it, and many times during its course. Bacon, Hazlitt, Johnson, Carlyle and extracts from Margot Asquith's diaries furnish the wadding for her shots. Here and there, a single, mote-sized diamond of language glitters in the ashen matrix of her diffusions. J. N.

NEW LIGHT ON LONGFELLOW, by James Tait Hatfield. *Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 187 pages. $3.50.*

The new light Mr. Hatfield throws on Longfellow is not very glaring: what it amounts to is a more detailed account than has yet been given of Longfellow's personal and literary associations with Germany. Though some of the new details—based on manuscript journals, letters, etc.—are moderately interesting, it is hard to see that they make the slightest difference in one's impression of the man. If this "new light" has any effect, it is likely to be, for some readers, quite the opposite of that which, according to Mr. Hatfield, his study of Longfellow had for him—namely, an enhanced appreciation of the poet's mind and work. Longfellow was a graceful and sometimes exquisite minor artist, but he was intellectually as imperturbable as Washington Irving, and the chief result of tracing his lifelong immersion in European

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literature is to invest with something of the miraculous his successful resistance to intellectual infection. A few pages of Goethe meant more to Emerson than libraries of German literature meant to Longfellow. Without leaving the country, and without having a word of the language at his command, Whitman caught more of the true spirit of German thought than, with all his traveling and all his philology, Longfellow ever guessed at. N. A.

LETTERS OF COURTSHIP between John Torr and Maria Jackson, 1838-43, edited by E. F. Carritt. *New York: Oxford University Press. 289 pages. $2.50.*

The final effect of these letters is strange. At first they have the wistful and anthropological charm of old daguerreotypes and of ethnic research. There is a profound tribal quality in the ritual of phrase and emotion in which the love of these two young Victorians is expressed, something we have lost in the stripped informality of our day. He was twenty, three years younger than the lady he loved, a Unitarian and a lax one at that, important objections and—here's *the real crux—not earning enough as a solicitor's* clerk to support a wife, when he wrote her his first love letter. It was impossible for them to be alone together, except very, very rarely, since they were not formally engaged. Dear Mamma, Papa and Uncle Jabez did not look kindly on his suit. They were always surrounded, conscious of innumerable eyes. Once he slipped her a letter and she was glad, yet she felt terribly ashamed and clandestine. Sometimes Papa and Mamma were invited to a dinner party and she hoped to be alone that evening, but dear Mamma got sick at the last moment and had to be nursed, or some family friend dropped in. It was hard even to write. Her "absence from the room was noticed" or a cousin flitted facetiously in and out asking questions that were not considered impertinent. No wonder the note of irritation creeps in, accusations of coldness on one side and the other, wounded feelings, explanations, remonstrance and reassurance, a suppressed point of hysteria. She has headaches and cannot sleep; he develops sore throats and chips on the shoulder. But slowly his fortunes have improved, and as partner of the firm he is at last an eligible suitor. . . . The reader sighs with relief, feeling that he too has waited five years and has spent sleepless nights without being compensated at long last by a honeymoon in Schlangenbad. C. S.

Travel

INDIAN AIR, by Paul Morand. *Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 235 pages. $2.*

Paul Morand is the fastest-traveling writer who has ever given his impressions of South America. He begins with the discovery that both Americas are covered by air, "common . . . pan-american air." Air leads to birds, birds to airplanes—the symbols of the new world; thenceforth, we have new efforts to capture cities, plains and continents in epigrams. Along the way he hears romantic interludes of history. It is easy to enjoy his quick and vivid watercolors, but hard to discover about what he is talking. In Buenos Aires, everything seems edible to Morand. Why? He stays long enough in Lima and Cuzco to understand the meaning of the pre-Columbian Inca socialistic state. The other pages of his book are made of bits of cacti, white roofs, old gardens, carved porticos, llamas, sunsets, mountain-Indian landscape. Morand is at his best when his prose approaches Lafcadio Hearn's in quality. His point of view is not sociological, esthetic or geographic. In substance, he is an advance-man for the industrial circus. J. N.

Contributors

LEWIS MUMFORD is the author of books on architecture, art and the social sciences. His "Technics and Civilization" will be published by Harcourt, Brace this spring.

ALBERT MAYER, one of the founders of the Housing Study Guild, was for some years on the Technical Advisory Committee of the New York State Housing Board.

HENRY WRIGHT has been associated in planning housing developments here and in Great Britain, including Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, and Radburn, New Jersey. For a time he acted as special consultant to the Housing Division of the P.W.A.

HERBERT S. WOOD is a certified public accountant specializing in income-tax practice. He was formerly assistant chief of the United States Bureau of Efficiency.

JOHN STRACHEY, author of "The Coming Struggle for Power" and "The Menace of Fascism," has returned to England after a lecture tour of this country.

STEPHEN SPENDER is one of the poets certain to be mentioned, along with Auden, Day and Lewis, when critics discuss the recent poetic renaissance in England. "Poems" is the title of his book, published by Faber and Faber.

HORACE GREGORY is the author of two volumes of poetry and of "Pilgrim of the Apocalypse," a critical study of D. H. Lawrence.

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L. R. NIENSTAEDT is a Danish economist who is making a study of industrial trends in this country.

The initials signed to the short reviews are those of James Neugass, Newton Arvin and Clara Stillman.

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